MASTER CRITICAL

STUDY

TO



THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA

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BERNARD SHAW

THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA

[Edited with a Critical Introduction, Text, Notes and Explanations, Questions with Answers]

MASTER ACADEMY
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LIFE OF BERNARD SHAW

Birth and Parentage

George Bernard Shaw was born on the 26th of July, 1856 in Dublin. He was the third child and only son of George Carr Shaw and Lucinda Elizabeth Gurley. His parents were originally of English stock and he claimed descent from Macdull, Thane of Fife and Oliver Cromwell. His parents were protestants and he was baptised in the Church of England. His father had a small post in the Dublin Law Courts but the office was abolished in 1850 and he retired on a small pension. He sold off his pension and invested the money in a corn merchant's business. But his business did not bring any profit. He had no qualifications for any profession and so had no means to support his family. He was "in principle an ardent teetotaller" but in actual practice he used to get terribly drunk, a state which was then "accompanied by torments of remorse and shame". He had no income and his intemperance and want of practical sagacity made it impossible for him to maintain his family.

His mother was the daughter of an Irish landlord. She had married Mr. Carr Shaw against the wishes of her own family. At that time she had no idea of his intemperate habits. During the honeymoon she saw empty bottles in his cupboard and wanted to leave him. But her family had disowned her and so she stuck on to her husband. But she was a disillusioned woman and the family remained unhappy throughout their stay together. She had an instinctive love of music and she practised this hobby to the utter neglect of the family. Shaw has described her as a "Bohemian anarchist with ladylike habits". He says that she was "incapable of unkindness to any child. . . . but

it never occurred to her that other people, specially children, needed guidance or training or that it mattered in the least what they ate or drank or what they did as long as they were not actively mischievous."

George Bernard Shaw, therefore, got no support or guidance from his parents.

Early Education

Shaw did not receive any systematic education. When he was very young he was taught by a governess at home. At the age of ten Shaw was admitted to the Wesleyan Connexional School which was afterwards known as Wesleyan College in Dublin. A little later he was sent to a private school in the countryside. In 1869 he joined the Central Model Boys' School in Dublin. Then he went to the Dublin English Scientific and Commercial Day School. But Shaw was not happy with this formal education and he did not learn much. He was more interested in literature, music and painting. He read Dickens, Defoe and Shakespeare. This reading and the music he heard at home interested him much more than his school lessons.

Junior Clerk

In 1871 Shaw left school and took up a job as a junior clerk in the office of an Estate Agent in Dublin on eighteen shillings a month. He worked very diligently and was promoted to the post of cashier. His work was found to be very satisfactory and he was paid £ 4 per month. He devoted all his spare time to his self-education in literature and music.

Moves to London

Shaw was doing well in Dublin and would have remained there all his life but his mother's interest in Music shaped his career in a different way. She took music lessons from Mr. Lee who had devised a new way of teaching music. When Lee decided to go to London, Mrs. Shaw followed him there. She started teaching music in schools and taking part in concerts.

While working in Dublin Shaw developed his literary interests thoroughly. He knew that London was the literery centre of Great Britain and so in 1876 he resigned his post in the Estate Office and joined his mother and sisters in London. There he continued his self-education. He learnt music from his mother. He studied literature at the British Museum. He wrote a good many articles for news-papers, most of which were reject-

ed. Between 1879 and 1883 he completed five novels. They were published serially in some magazines but did not prove to be popular.

Because of his poverty he accepted the post of Way Leave Manager in the Edison Telephone Company in 1879. But commerce was not for him and within a year he resigned this job describing it as "this sin against my nature."

During these years Shaw attended a lot of political meetings and took part in many debates. He spoke in halls and street corners. On the 2nd of September, 1882, he heard a lecture by Henry George, the author of *Progress and Prosperity*. This lecture and the study of his book made Shaw realize the economic basis of society. Next, he studied Karl Marx. This made him a socialist. On September 5, 1884, he joined the Fabian Society. Now he started writing pamphlets and delivering lectures on socialism. Work for the Fabian Society brought him in contact with H. G. Wells, Sidney Webb and his wife, Beatice Webb, Ramsay MacDonald and Annie Besant. He became friendly with William Archer who, at this time, was translating the plays of Ibsen into English. Finding Shaw in need and recognizing his exceptional literary ability Archer gave him a part of his own journalistic work for the '*Pall Mall Gazette*' and '*The World*'. This established Shaw in London journalism. In 1885, he became music critic for 'the Star'. From 1885 to 1898 he worked as the dramatic critic of '*Saturday Review*'. He liked Ibsen's Problem Plays very much and reviewed them very favourably. He summed up his views on Ibsen in a booklet entitled "*The Quintessence of Ibsenism.*"

Training for Authorship

During the first nine years of his journalistic efforts he earned only £ 6. But his early experiences trained his mind in various ways. These also determined the nature of his writings. His unhappy childhood developed his independent outlook. Since nobody guided him, he learnt to depend only on his own judgement. His poverty made him realize the sufferings of the poor who were all being exploited by the rich. It developed his fighting spirit and his zeal to fight against social injustice. His early training in music helped him to write prose in such a rhythmical manner that his dialogues are always charming and even his long speeches do not bore us. The membership of the Fabian Society and the study of Karl Marx made

him a determined socialist. The writing of novels trained him to write prose in a charming style. Ibsen taught him that drama was the correct medium for the discussion of social, political and economic problems.

Beginning as a Playwright

His friend, William Archer, suggested that they should collaborate in writing a play on a social or economic problem in the style of Ibsen. Shaw started writing what later on appeared as '*Widowers' Houses*'. In October, 1887, Shaw showed Archer the first two Acts of this play. He did not like it, and that ended the collaboration. Shaw put the play aside and it appeared only in 1892. In the meantime he continued his work as a music critic and a dramatic critic. In 1893 he wrote '*The Philanderer*' and in 1894 he wrote *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. This was on prostitution and so it was banned by the censor. *Arms and the Man* appeared in 1894 and *Candida* and the *Man of Destiny* appeared in 1895.

The plays did not become very popular and provoked a lot of adverse comment. Many critics called them Fabian pamphlets. Many of them called them debates rather than plays. But many of the critics and the theatre-goers liked them immensely. Shaw decided to continue writing plays. He wanted to mould the taste of the people in such a way that they should start liking his plays.

Arms and the Man was acted on fifty occasions at the Avenue Theatre in 1894 but the other plays could only be acted on a few nights. Shaw, therefore, decided to cater to the reading public. He prepared the plays for publication with long prefaces and detailed stage directions. Gradually he gained recognition and by the turn of the century he was a distinguished playwright. Signal success came to Shaw in the English theatre during the repertory season conducted at the Court Theatre, London, by J. E. Vendrenne and Granville Barker in the years 1904-1907. When *Major Barbara* was first performed the Prime Minister, Mr. Balfour, was among the spectators. The Drama of Ideas had become firmly established in England.

Marriage

Bernard Shaw met Miss Payne-Townshend at a Fabian Society House-party and they were attracted towards each other. She was a rich heiress but Shaw was still a struggling playwright and so could not think of marriage. Gradually his in-

come increased. In 1898 Shaw had a breakdown of health and Miss Payne Townshend came to nurse him. They were married on 1st June 1898. After the marriage Shaw moved to his wife's flat at 10, Adelphi Terrace. Later he settled at Ayot St. Lawrence in Hertfordshire.

Fame

As time passed a new generation of theatre-goers came who were deeply agitated about the problems of life and society and who, therefore, liked the intellectual discussions of Shaw. When 'Saint Joan' appeared in 1923 people accepted Shaw as the best British playwright, next only to Shakespeare. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1925.

World Wars

Shaw lived through two World Wars. He was opposed to wars in all forms and so he refused to toe the British line. He criticised both sides. He was often misunderstood. In fact, it was said that "the allies seemed to be fighting against a combination of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Mr. Shaw." But in spite of such misunderstandings he stuck to his total opposition to war.

Travels

He was an internationalist by temperament but he was not fond of foreign travel. In 1931, at the insistence of his wife and friends, he went to Russia and celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday in Moscow. He had a long conversation with Stalin. In 1932-33 he went on a voyage round the world during which he visited Bombay as well.

Radio and Talkies

When the radio came, Shaw permitted his plays to be broadcast but he did not permit any part of the dialogue to be deleted. When the talkies came, producers wanted to make film versions of his plays. At first he insisted that no change should be made in the plays. Later he relented. In fact, for the films on 'Major Barbara, Caesar and Cleopatra and Pygmalion' he was even persuaded to write additional scenes.

His work

George Bernard Shaw had a long life. His last famous play, *The Apple Cart*, was produced in 1929; but he continued to write plays right up to the time of his death. He lived to see many of the evils against which he had fought disappearing

from England. Poverty was considerably reduced. The Welfare State had come into being. Labour was governing the land. The British Empire had crumpled. The British people took as much interest in the prevention of diseases as in their cure. Still he was not happy with the ways of man, specially in the political and economic spheres. Being an optimist and a believer in creative evolution, he looked forward to the day when man would become a superman.

Many honours were offered to him including an offer of a peerage but he refused all of them.

Death

Mrs. Shaw had died in 1943. Shaw celebrated his ninety-fifth birthday. A week later he was working in his garden when he suddenly fell down and fractured his thigh. He responded to treatment and was discharged from the hospital but continued to grow weaker and weaker. He died peacefully on Thursday, the 2nd of November, 1950. According to his wishes he was cremated and his ashes, along with those of his wife, were scattered in the garden of his house at Ayot St. Lawrence. Thus the British people were denied the privilege of burying him in Westminster Abbey.

In his will he left a large part of his wealth for a reform of the English alphabet and English spellings.

Shaw did not believe in any organized religion but in his own life he practised what all religions preach. He was simple in his habits, did hot touch alcohol, did not smoke and was a vegetarian. He campaigned against all evils and led a perfectly noble life.

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CHRONOLOGY OF SHAW'S LIFE AND PRINCIPAL WORKS

26th July 1856	Shaw was born
1866	Entered the Wesleyan Connnexional School
1871	Became Junior clerk to a Dublin Estate Agent
1876	Came to London.
1879-1883	First novel *Immaturity* followed by four others
5th Sept 1884	Joined the Fabian Society
1885	Started book-reviewing for the Pall Mall Gazette
1885-1892	*Widowers' House*
1890-1898	Wrote criticism on art, literature, music and drama for various papers.
1891	Wrote *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*
1893	*The Philanderer*
1893-1894	*Mrs. Warren's Profession*
1894	*Arms and the Man*
1894-95	*Candida*
1895	Wrote 'the Sanity of Art' *The Man of Destiny You Never Can Tell* 'The perfect Wagnerite'
1896	*The Devil's Disciple*
1st June, 1898	Married Charlotte Payne-Townshend
1898	*Ceasar and Cleopatra*

1899	*Captain Brassbound's Conversion*
1901-1903	*Man and Superman*
1904	*John Bull's Other Island*
1905	*Major Barbara*
1906	*The Doctor's Dilemma*
1908	*Getting Married*
1910	*The Dark Lády of the Sonnets*
1912	*Androcles and the Lion*
1912-1913	*Pygmalion*
1914	*'Commonsense about War'*
1913-1919	*Heartbreak House*
1918-1920	*Back to Methuselah*
1923	*Saint Joan*
1925	Awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.
1928	Wrote 'The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Capitalism and Socialism'.
1929	*The Apple Cart*
1931	Shaw visited the U. S. S. R.
	Too true to be Good
1932-1933	Shaw undertook a World tour. He visited the U. S. A. and also came up to Bombay.
1939	*In Good King Charles's Golden Days*
12th Sept. 1943	Mrs. Shaw died
1950	*Why She Would Not*
2nd Nov. 1950	Shaw died at Ayot St. Lawrence.

A few collections of Shaw's plays were published as follows :—

1. *Plays Unpleasant*— Published in 1898—included :—

    (1) *Widowers's Houses*
    (2) *Mrs. Warren's Profession*
    (3) *The Philanderer*

2. *Plays Pleasant*— Published in 1898—included :—

    (1) *Arms and the Man*

(2) *Candida*
(3) *The Man of Destiny*
(4) *You Never Can Tell*

3. *Plays for Puritans*— Published in 1901—included :—

(1) *The Devil's Disciple*
(2) *Caesar and Cleopatra*
(3) *Captain Brassbound's conversion.*

3

SHAW'S PREDECESSORS

The Decline of Drama

The Elizabethan age was the golden period of British drama. Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Marlow, Webster and a host of eminent playwrights took British drama to dizzy heights. But by the thirties of the seventeenth Century drama began to decline The Puritans closed the theatres in 1642. When they were reopened after the restoration of Charles II, drama took its cue from the King and the court and became extremely licentious. It reflected the life of the court and became cut off from the main stream of British life. Great Comedy was revived in the eighteenth century by Goldsmith and Sheridan. But after that drama again sank to a low level. The early nineteenth century was a period of great poetry but not of great drama. Great lyrics were produced by poets who were all subjective in outlook. Drama requires objectivity. Shelley, Keats, Byron, Wordsworth, Southey and Lamb all wrote plays but they could not create living personalities different from their own selves. The heroes of Shelley's plays became only true copies of Shelley. Byron's characters all became Byronic. These are known as "Closet Plays".

The stage managers employed mediocre writers to produce some plays to be acted. But they only produced trash. Good novels were being written and so people preferred to sit at home and read them. In the middle of the nineteenth century Matthew Arnold wrote: "In England we have no drama at all."

The Beginnings of Realistic Drama

Modern realistic drama began in England with the writing of *Caste* in 1867 by *T. W. Robertson*. He began life as an actor and then started writing plays. He knew life and he knew the

stage well. So he introduced realistic situations and living characters in plays which are remarkable for their craftsmanship. His plays presented the point of view of the rising Victorian middle class in England. He could not rise above conventions but he brought naturalism to the English stage.

Robertson was followed by *Arther Pinero*. He wrote a number of realistic domestic dramas like *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. He does not believe in conventions but deals with realistic situations. With him character is destiny.

A real advaçe in realistic drama was made by *Henry Arthur Jones*. In his *Saints and Sinners* he satirised the false beliefs and the commercialism of the English middle class. He regarded drama as a critism of life. He printed this play with a Preface in which he tried to explain his point of view to the reading public.

Towards the end of the Nineteenth oentury *Oscar Wilde* started delighting British audiences with his comedy of manners. He was weak in characterization but knew how to create humorous situations. His dialogue is full of witty and paradoxical statements which send audiences to roars of laughter. Entertainment was his one aim and he was not çoncerned with social problems. *The Importance of Being Earnest* has continued to delight audiences to this day.

But the person who revolutionised British drama was a Norwegian dramatist, Henrik Ibsen by name. He started introducing contemporary problems in his plays.

The Revival of Drama under Ibsen's Influence

Ibsen was a Norwegian dramatist who created a sensation in the literary circles of Europe by publishing in 1879 a play called '*Doll's House*'. The play begins like a traditional play and proceeds on in a traditional manner till the middle of the last Act and then there is a sudden change which heralded the Drama of Ideas.

Nora, the heroine, is the beautiful wife of Torwald Helmer and the mother of three children. Her husband had always treated her like a doll. She borrowed some money from Krogstad and forged a signature on the bond. Krogstad is working in a Bank of which Helmer is the manager. Krogstad is guilty of a forgery for which he is to be dismissed from the Bank. He tells Nora that she must persuade her husband not to dismiss him. otherwise he would exposę her forgery to her husband,

He is, however, dismissed. He now writes to Helmer what his wife had done. Helmer is furious with his wife. Just then the forged bond is sent to her by a friend. So her reputation is saved. In a traditional play the husband and wife would have rushed into each other's arms and lived happily ever after. But not so here. They sit down and discuss seriously their relations with one another. She is not prepared to be treated as a doll any longer. She determines to be economically and mentally independent and she sweeps out of the house leaving her husband and children behind.

This Discussion scene disturbed a thousand homes and created a storm.

Ibsen then wrote '*Ghosts*' in which he discussed the problem of hereditary disease. All his plays discussed the various problems of society.

In 1889 '*A Doll's House*' was produced in England as translated by William Archer. It created an uproar. Many critics condemned Ibsen. They argued that a discussion or a debate had no place in a drama. But Shaw strongly supported Ibsen. He wrote *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*. He started writing plays to demonstrate that problem plays such as Ibsen was writing could succeed on the stage. Under Ibsen's influence he wrote plays on the problems of slum-landlordism (*Widowers' Houses*) and prostitution (*Mrs. Warren's Profession*). In *Candida* he wrote a domestic drama in the style of Ibsen.

But Shaw's temperament was different from that of Ibsen. Ibsen was grim and often bitter and wrote in the tragic vein. Shaw was witty and gay and loved fun. Edward Bernstein described Shaw as the "laughing Ibsen".

This brought about a wonderful revival of realistic drama in England. Galsworthy and other playwrights started writing plays based on the problems of society. The people were delighted to find that they were being presented on the stage and their problems were being analysed in a witty and humorous manner.

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SHAW'S MAIN IDEALS AND BELIEFS

Introduction

Shaw did not claim originality for his views. In fact he said that a man can no more be original than a tree can grow out of air.

He is original in the sense that he has done a lot of original thinking on the conventional ideas and then put forward his views most eloquently in his own way.

These ideas constitute what might be called his philosophy of life.

Shaw's purpose in writing plays was to convert his readers and audiences to his point of view. It is, therefore, very necessary to know his ideas in order to fully appreciate his plays.

Emotion, Reason and Instinct

Shaw does not believe in the emotions. According to him all human emotions are false sentiments. We should be guided by reason But Shaw the Biologist does not believe in reason either. Life Force, which Shaw thinks, is the real thing in this world, works on instinct. Shaw, therefore, says, "The man who listens to reason is lost."

Shaw's supermen are guided by their instincts which are regulated by reason. They are not guided by convention or sentiment.

We find all three of them—emotion, reason and instinct—at work in *Arms and the Man*. The play begins as a drama of emotions. A romantic girl hears that her fiance has proved to be bravest of the brave and has led a cavalry charge against a battery of machine guns. An officer who has run away from the battlefield is being pursued by enemy soldiers. He is a brave

soldier but he acts on instinct and climbs to the lady's bed-room for safety. He shocks her by saying that nine soldiers out of ten are born fools and that seasoned soldiers carry chocolates instead of cartridges to the battlefield. The charge of the lady's hero was made because his horse ran away with him and it succeeded because the enemy guns could not fire as they had been supplied with wrong ammunition. Bluntschli's reasoning shatters Raina's false sentiments about wars.

The glamour of higher love falls to the ground when it is found that the girl (Raina) is being instinctively drawn towards Bluntschli who had entered her bed-room and her hero, Sergius, is drawn by instinct towards Louka, the maid-servant. Emotions prove to be false and instincts triumph. Raina marries Bluntschli and Sergius marries Louka.

His Anti-Sentimentalism

Shaw's entire work was based on rationalism and revolt against sentiments. He opposed all false beliefs, and false ideologies which are based on sentiments.

Shaw was not against genuine emotions but he believed that so long as we have capitalism and private property, poverty and inequality, we cannot have genuine emotions. The capitalists who control our political, social and religious organizations and own our news-papers create false sentiments in the minds of the people in order to exploit them for their own benefit. The ideals placed before society are false. For example, wars benefit the capitalists. So they represent butchery as bravery, hatred of other nations as patriotism and loot and mass murder as victory. The people are roused up to fight. The capitalists build their billions in banks. While millions of poor people die on the battlefields.

Other dramatists rouse up the sentiments of the audience against a capitalist or a cruel master or a prostitute. But Shaw does not blame individuals. The whole of our economic structure is wrong. The whole of our society is guilty of the crimes so long as we keep the system. So it is absurd to condemn one capitalist or one landlord or to sympathise with one victim. If we want to end the evils we must change the capitalistic system of our economy. The problem cannot be solved by sentimental hysterics.

Shaw's plays are marked by Stark realism. Sometimes we feel that he is unrealistic when actually his knowledge of facts

is better than ours. For example, when some critics pointed out that his picture of a cowardly soldier was unrealistic, he gave a lot of examples from the biographies of great soldiers to show that cowardice is man's natural instinct.

Shaw has thrown a searchlight of reason on the problems of war and love in *Arms and the Man*, on prostitution in *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, on marriage in *The Philanderer*, *Getting Married* and *Candida*, on capitalism in *Widowers' Houses* and *Apple Cart*, on religion in *Major Barbara* and *Androcles and the Lion* and on the abuses of the medical profession in *The Doctor's Dilemma* and the *The Philanderer*.

Shaw is also unromantic and anti-sentimental because he is a biologist. He believes in the Life Force which is a force working in nature for the betterment of the race and the evolution of the superman. The Life Force selects woman as its agent and creates the sexual urge in her. She then hunts for a mate so that she can create a better race of men.

This is "genuine natural history" but human society has built up the institution of marriage which is a tissue of sentiments. Marriage brings about economic bondage for the wife and sexual bondage for both. Most husbands treat their wives as no better than slaves and prostitutes. Shaw's anti-sentimentalism, therefore, has led him to dislike marriage.

Shaw has rationalized the emotions and made the intellect Man's ruling passion.

Shaw's supermen all abhor sentiments. His Napoleon is above the sentiments of love, jealousy and shame. His Caesar likes Cleopatra but is not a slave of passion. Bluntschli, when pursued by the enemy, works on instinct and saves his life by climbing to a lady's bed chamber. Joan works on her instincts and her individual judgement against the judgements of the custodians of the Church and the State.

Shaw, therefore, feels that we can bring about the betterment of the race if we banish all sentiments and base our conduct on reason and instinct.

Capitalism

In modern society we are all in the grip of the octopus of capitalism. Our worst evil is poverty and that is caused by the exploitation of the poor by the capitalists. People become rich only by exploiting the poor.

Our institutions like marriage, property, family and the church are based on capitalism. Our social virtues like charity thrive on poverty. In *Major Barbara* we are shown that religious institutions like the Salvation Army run with the donations given by capitalists. All the feelings that are called noble from parental love to patriotism are all created by capitalism.

Capitalists become richer in wars. So they involve nations in wars. Then they want that people should come forward to fight and die in these wars. So they stir up the feeling of patriotism in the people. The poor people give their lives in the wars and the capitalists make their millions.

Political organizations are all controlled by capitalists. They do not enter Parliament but they pay the politicians to do what they desire. In *Heatbreak House* Mangon is a rich man but a fool. He finances a political party and so is appointed the Director of a Government Department. The members of Parliament are in the pay of the capitalists. So they cannot govern. They discuss all the issues and then do what the capitalists desire.

In *The Apple Cart* Shaw shows that all real power is in the hands of "Breakages Limited". They are naturally opposed to all reform which will take power from their hands. In the Preface to this play Shaw says, "The conflict is not really between royalty and democracy. It is between both and plutocracy, which, having destroyed the royal power by frank force under democratic pretexts, has bought and swallowed democracy. Money talks ; money prints, money broadcasts, money reigns and kings and labour leaders alike have to register its decrees, and even, by a staggering paradox, to finance its enterprises and guarantee its profits. Ministers who are socialists to the backbone are as helpless in the grip of Breakages Limited as its acknowledged henchmen".

Marriage

Shaw believes that the purpose of Nature is to evolve a better race of human beings than the present ones. Woman is Nature's agent for this purpose. The Life Force wants her to produce good children so that its evolutionary purpose can be served. But for procreation and for the care of the children she needs man. For this purpose the institution of marriage was devised.

But marriage in its present form does not serve this pur-

pose. Its evolutionary purpose has been forgotten and it has become associated with respectability, and poverty. People get married to lead a romantic and happy life. Sentimentality rather than sex has become the aim of marriage. Marriage is a permanent relationship and it results in a sentimental attachment of the husband and the wife and so the evolutionary purpose of the Life Force is lost.

Sex is a powerful urge, and it is a sacred urge because the Life Force works through it. But sex is a matter of moments. It does not require any intimacy and does not produce any personal relationship. Then why resort to a permanent marriage for the satisfaction of the sexual urge—? Thus marriage is based on false biology. People marry for love, duty and all other noble things of life. So marriage has become an obstacle to the free functioning of the Life Force.

According to Shaw, the present form of marriage creates economic bondage for the woman and sexual bondage for both. In fact, Shaw felt that for women the present form of marriage is no better than prostitution.

In *Arms and the Man* Sergius is strongly attracted by Louka but he cannot propose to her because she is a miad-servant. In stead of that he carries on a false "higher love" to Raina in order to keep up his position. Raina has fallen in love with Bluntschli whom she calls her "chocolate cream soldier" but she cannot think of marrying a refugee from Switzerland. She agrees to marry him only when it is discovered that he has inherited the vast wealth of his father who was a rich hotel-keeper of Switzerland.

In Shaw's ideal society, described in *Back to Methuselah*, there is no marriage, no family and no property. A woman may have sex relations with any man who attracts her, and different men may be the fathers of lady's different children. Women who produce good children will be asked to produce many children. There will be no property. Women will not be economically dependent on men. The state will be responsible for the rearing of children after the age of 10 years.

However, Shaw can tolerate marriages in modern society which are based on commonsense and sex-attraction and not on romantic love. There should be no social or caste barriers in choosing one's life partner. The couples should have an adequate income and should not suffer from the evil of poverty which is

the beginning of all crimes. The couple should be in good health. The husband and wife should be economically independent of each other. And divorce should be made easy and honourable. If these changes are made, marriages can serve their eugenic purpose of producing a better race of human beings.

The Position of Women

Shaw feels that women have been treated rather badly in modern society. They are poorly paid in industry. This has led to prostitution. They are not paid at all for their work in the family. In most cases husbands treat their wives as worse than prostitutes.

Because of the dependence of women on men in modern society, they feel that they must hunt for a husband. In the past people always regarded man as the hunter and woman as the hunted. But Shaw has reversed their roles. A woman feels that she has to depend upon a man for her maintenance, for the procreation of her children and for their support as they grow up. So she must hunt for a man. It is true that in modern society a man must propose to her. But she will employ her tricks to win him over. He may not be "biologically attractive" ; he may even be a fraud but so long as he can provide for herself and her children, she would like to entangle a man to propose to her. Thus in *Man and Superman* Ann Whitefield has decided to marry Tanner and she pursues him across the continent up to the Spanish Sierra and finally marries him.

In Shaw's view woman is the hunter and man the quarry. In real life, although women may desire to get married, bashfulness prevents them from pursuing men. But Shaw shows the desire for mating as the most important factor in the conduct of young ladies in numerous plays including *Man and Superman*, *Overruled*, *Getting Married* and *Misalliance*.

In Shaw's view woman is the hunter and man the quarry.

Medical Science

Shaw is opposed to doctors because they thrive on diseases. They become rich at the cost of diseased persons. It should be the duty of doctors to eradicate diseases and not thrive on them.

Diseases are caused by our capitalistic civilization. If there

is no poverty, no dirt, no idleness and no overwork, there will be no disease.

Since the conditions of modern society are responsible for diseases, it is the duty of the state to provide doctors to the people. The sick should not be left at the mercy of greedy and blundering doctors.

Each specialist in the *Doctor's Dilemma* has his own whims and theories. Dr. Ridgeon has his Opsonin treatment, B. B. believes in stimulating the phagocytes and for Walpole the removal of the Nucivormsac is the panacea for all ills.

The doctors have no sympathy for patients ; even a dying patient is an "interesting" case for them. When Dubedat is on the point of death, B. B. says, "It is an enormously interesting case, you know, Colly . . . . . I shall write a paper about this case."

Dr. Paramore, the *Philanderer*, has thought of a new fatal disease which he called Paramore's disease. He has put forward his theory on the basis of experiments on three dogs and one monkey. When it is proved that there is no such disease he is very sad.

Shaw, therefore, concludes that the so-called "medical science" is not a science at all but a branch of witchcraft.

Wars

Shaw condemns war. He strives for peace because the Life Force can work for the betterment of the race in an atmosphere of peace. Darwin said that evolution takes place only through the struggle for existence. Shaw does not believe in struggle. He says that the human race can become better only through peaceful cooperation.

Wars have been popular in the world because they benefit the capitalists. They make the poor soldiers fight and die for them by attaching the false sentiments of bravery, glory, patriotism, chivalry, etc., to the wars.

In the first murder in the world Cain killed his brother Abel because he was richer. Since then individuals and clans and nations have been fighting against each other to grab the wealth of others. Wars are also popular because poor people find in the army an outlet from the poverty, misery and dullness of their home life.

Shaw is of the opinion that cawardice rather than courage is a virtue. The instinct of cowardice is a fundamental instinct because it preserves life. Shaw's superman-hero, Bluntschli, runs away from the battlefield and seeks refuge in a lady's bed-room. In *Back to Methuselah* the people have discovered that cowardice is a great virtue and they have erected a monument to the first great coward, Sir John Falstaff.

As a socialist and biologist he regarded it as his duty to oppose a war even when Britain was involved in it. During the First World War he was greatly misunderstood. "In the opinion of many people, the Allies seemed to be fighting against a combination of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Mr. Shaw."

But Shaw did not support Germany either. He was opposed to war in general. He, in fact, condemned Germany more. He said that England seemed to have a better cause then Germany because "Englishmen are past masters in the art of hypocrisy."

The following beautiful words are addressed to all war-mongers :

> "Will you now at last believe, O stupid British, German and French patriots, what the socialists have been telling you for so many years : that your Union Jacks and tricolours and Imperial Eagles . . . . . . are only toys to keep you amused, and that there are only two real flags in theworld : the red flag of democratic socialism and the black flag of capitalism, the flag of God and the flag of Mammon ?"

Shaw's Religion

Shaw did not believe in any organized religion. He did not believe in Christianity since he felt that the churches are not practising what Jesus Christ preached. But his ideals and his conduct were like those of a truly religious man. He loved all fellow creatures, including animals, and led a simple and noble life . . . . . He was a complete vegetarian and did not touch alcohol. Nor did he smoke tobacco.

He did not like organized religions because he felt that they had forgotten their principles and had become slaves of conventions and rituals. A good religion, according to Shaw, should be based on instincts and primary impulses. It should be based on sound Economics and sound biology.

Christianity which says "Blessed are the poor" cannot be a good religion because poverty degrades the soul. A good religion should be based on an equitable distributon of wealth. At present religious organizations have to take money for their survival from dealers in whisky and makers of arms. Major Barbara finds that it is difficult to preach religion to hungry men. It is also wrong to enrol poor people in a religious organization by bribing them with bread.

A good religion should not be metaphysical or unearthly. It should be in touch with reality. It should be based on economic justice. It should not dictate a fixed code of conduct and worship to its followers but should leave it to their divine instincts which are above reason.

Art

Shaw condemned the idea of pure art or art for art's sake. Art should always be didactic. He wrote plays only to convert the public to his point of view. Every play has a purpose. Every play has a thesis and it is driven home to the spectators and the readers through interesting situations, interesting characters and witty and humorous dialogue.

Shaw said that the highest form ot literature much have an ethical purpose. He placed instinct first and art second. Like George Orwell, Shaw insisted that all art is propagandist.

For example, in *Pygmalion* Shaw wanted to show that there is no basic difference between higher and lower classes. If a person born in a low class gets the opportunity to be trained in the ways of correct speech and manners, he or she can easily come to the level of the higher classes. This he proves by showing how a flower girl is trained within a period of six months to speak and behave like a duchess.

And he introduces Alfred Doolittle to convey his views regarding middle class morality.

Shaw writes in his Preface to this play : "I wish to boast that *Pygmalion* has been an extremely successful play, both on the stage and screen, all over Europe and North America as will as at home. It is so intensely and deliberately didactic, and its subject is esteemed so dry, that I delight in throwing it at the heads of wiseacres who repeat the parrot cry that art should never be didactic. It goes to prove my contention that great art can never be anything else."

Individual Righteousness

Shaw does not believe in individual righteousness. He found that society is rotten to the core and so no individual, however good he might be, can set it right by his own unaided efforts. A person's personal goodness is of no use so long as the whole of society is being exploited by capitalists.

In *Widowers' Houses* the hero, a good man himself, is shocked to discover that his income is derived from the very slum-landlordism which he wishes to abolish. In *Major Barbara* the heroine is shocked to find that the salvation Army which is trying to save the souls of the poor has to depend for its finances on the very copitalism which is responsible for their poverty and misery.

Shaw, therefore, said, "Modern society including its reverend pastors, its aristocratic barons and plutocratic merchant princes, is hopelessly in the wrong. It is no use complaining against individual villainy or commiserating with individual misery. The problems of the world are in the ultimate analysis only of two kinds—biological and economic ; and it is silly to think that they can be solved by sentimental hysterics."

Sex

Commonly sex is associated with sensual pleasure. But Shaw looks at sex from the point of view of a biologist and economist. He talks of sex very frankly and separates it from its sentimental associations.

Sex is the most violent and the most impersonal of all instincts. It is a sacred instinct because the Life Force works through it for the betterment of the race.

Sex is liked by Shaw because it produces "a celestial flood of emotion" and "an exaltation of existence".

It is the duty of man to make his children greater than himself so that man ultimately evolves into the Superman. But procreation is largely an unconscious process. But what we can do is to leave the unconscious will free to act as it chooses. In the matter of sex we should act on instinct. Shaw does not like marriage in its present form because it places restrictions on this instinct and introduces sexual bondage for both husband and wife.

Six is a fundamental instinct. Its purpose is creative and evolutionary. It is an agent of the Life Force for the better-

ment of the race. Therefore, in Shaw's view, sex should not be mixed with romance, marriage and property.

Law and Justice

Shaw said that our laws had been made only to defend property and he agreed with Proudhon who described property as theft. Our laws are made only to punish those who disturb the property of the rich.

Shaw felt that even good laws could not improve the condition of the people. For the making of a good society we do not need good laws but good men and women. People should not only have good intentions but should do good actions.

When society is rotten to the core the righteousness of a few men will be of no avail. All the people should be good. Then we shall have a good social and political set-up and good laws. But if good laws are passed by a few good persons and the rest of the persons are corrupt, society cannot be reformed.

Shaw was also against the idea of the state punishing people. Shaw believed in creative evolution and all punishment is destructive.

Shaw felt that the so-called justice of the state was only revenge. Evil should be conquered with good and not with evil.

Creative Evolution

Shaw was a biologist-economist and his thinking on these subjects had a profound effect on his plays. About the effect of his economic studies on his plays Shaw has said, "In all my plays my economic studies have played an important as a knowledge of Anatomy does in the works of Michael Angelo."

Different from Darwin

Shaw differs from Darwin regarding evolution. Darwin's theory is based on the Struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest in which the weak are killed by the strong. Darwin eliminated will from the universe and made man the plaything of blind forces. Shaw rejects this theory of struggle and pain. According to Shaw human will is dynamic and creative. Man can hasten his evolution by "willing" his upward dovelopment. Darwin makes evolution external and accidental. Man becomes the creature of environment. Shaw, on the other hand, believes that man can create his own environment. His idea is that the fittest are the persons who have superior intel-

ligence and a strong will to become better. Shaw rejects the theory of natural selection and puts forward his theory that the best persons are selected by the Life Force.

The Life Force

Shaw has put forward his theory of the Life Force in his *Man and Superman* and *Back to Methuselah*. Life Force is a power working upon the minds and hearts of man seeking to raise them to a higher level of life. It is dynamic and creative. It is something like the "will of God".

The most active thing in life is Will. Among animals it is blindly active. Among human beings also it is mostly unconscious, for example in digestion, circulation, growth, reproduction etc. Shaw gives the name of Life Force to this creative will. Its aim is evolution or betterment.

The Life Force has been trying all the time to improve its own creations. It leaves behind the lower forms of life and proceeds to create better forms. The Life Force wants that man should evolve into the superman. If we do not help it in this work, it is possible that man will be discarded in favour of a better species.

The aim of the Life Force is not beauty, otherwise it would have stopped at the beautiful birds like the peacock. It does not care for happiness. Nor does it care for conventional morality. All that improves the race is good. People have to make a lot of sacrifice to fulfil the purposes of the Life Force. When Tanner has finally been caught by Ann, he says, "The Life Force enchants me : I have the whole world in my arms when I clasp you. But I am fighting for my freedom—for myself, one and indivisible". When he finally agrees to get married to Ann he says, "What we have both done this afternoon is to renounce happiness, renounce freedom, renounce tranquillity, above all, renounce the romantic possibilities of an unknown future, for the cares of a household and a family".

Real Progress

Man thinks that he is making progress if he produces better gadgets or better machines of destruction. Real progress, however, means producing a better race of men.

Evolution and Socialism

Procreation is an unconscious process and so we may ask what we can *do* to produce better children. Shaw's reply is that

we should leave the Life Force free to do its own work. Here Shaw's belief in socialism comes in. Capitalism has created conditions which prevent the Life Force from doing its work. If there is no inequality and no poverty, if there is work and leisure for all, the Life Force will be free to produce the superman. Thus Shaw's theory of evolution and his theory of socialism merge together.

Thus it is possible that by the force of unconcious will and instinct a princess may choose her footman as a mate. That will perhaps create a better race of men. But due to our conventions she will not be permitted to marry him. Perfect evolution is, therefore, possible only if there is perfect equality of incomes.

No Trouble

The Life Force wants evolution to be as smooth as, possible. There should be no excessive trouble or strain on anyone. Lilith, the mother of Adam and Eve, decided to produce two creatures—male and female—because she felt that if creation is left to one person it would become too difficult and troublesome. At present the human child is born in a helpless condition and it takes him a few years to become fully developed. At the same time, it would be very troublesome for the mother if the child were to remain in the womb till he was fully developed. Shaw has a solution for it. In the year 1920 the baby emerges fully developed out of an egg.

Aim of Creative Evolution

Marriages of convenience prevent the human race from advancing further. We should submit to the mysterious force of sex attraction. We should have a strong will to become better and live longer. We should pass on that will to our children. And we should bring about economic equality. If we do all this we will be helping the Life Force to create a race of supermen. Then all the evils will be eliminated and virtue and wisdom will reign on earth. This is the ultimate aim of creative evolution.

Shaw's Ideal Society

Shaw's ideal society is described by him in *Back to Methuselah.*

There is no family in this society. There is no marriage. A

woman can mate with any man according to her instincts. She is not permanently attached to any man.

A woman who produces good children is asked to specialize in producing children. She is not obliged to live with the father or fathers of her children.

The state looks after the children above the age of ten years.

There is no private property. Thus all the evils of our present society caused by money, property and marriage are eliminated in this ideal society.

5

SHAW'S MAIN PLAYS

The plays of Shaw are all problem plays. They present the various aspects of our social, economic, political and moral problems. Each play presents a thesis but the thesis does not overburden the play. The discussion is carried on by living characters, and the dialogue is full of sparkling wit.

Widowers' Houses

Shaw wrote his first play, *Widowers' Houses* in 1885. Earlier he had written five novels which had not made a mark. As a dramatic critic he had lent a strong support to the dramatic methods of Ibsen. He wrote this play to demonstrate that an interesting play could be written on an economic problem.

This play shows how the poor are exploited by capitalists. They build slums and become rich at the cost of the poor slum-dwellers. It is not one landlord who is responsible for the exploitation but every member of the upper middle class is in one way or the other responsible for the exploitation of the poor. Individually we may be good persons but we are all in the grip of the octopus of capitalism. Even schemes of improvement only fill the coffers of the rich at the cost of the poor.

In this play a young doctor falls in love with a young girl but he is shocked to discover that her father's money is obtained from the landlordism of slums. Trench is a good man but he is shocked to find that his income is derived from the slums built by Sartorius.

While seeing this play the members of the audience realize that they are as much responsible for the poverty of the slums as the slum landlord himself. We are all parasites on the poor.

This play was not liked by the audiences who wanted only

light-hearted entertainment on the stage. They were not interested in seeing on the stage an analysis of the sources of their income. The critics denounced it as "a mere pamphlet". *The Star* called it "an exposition in dialogue of New Economics".

But the discerning critics observed that it offered the promise of a new type of drama of ideas. The characters were not merely mouthpieces of Shaw but had a life of their own. The dialogue was witty and gripping.

When the play was revived after about half a century it was a great success.

Allardyce Nicoll has said, "*Widowers' Houses* marked the beginning of a new epoch in drama."

Mrs. Warren's Profession

This was Shaw's next play. It was written in 1893. Its subject is prostitution. Shaw's idea is that this evil is due to our capitalistic economy. Women become prostitutes because of poverty, underpayment and unemployment.

Kitty Warren was extremely poor. Her sister Lizzy suggested to her this way of earning a living. She gains wealth and now she is the Managing Director of a large number of repectable hotels in the big cities of Europe which are actually brothels. Big capitalists are her customers. Their business drives women to poverty and so they become prostitutes in Mrs. Warren's establishments.

She has a very independent-minded daughter, Vivie. She is a Maths Tripos but she is an "ignorant barbarian" because she knows nothing except Mathematics She has taken up a job in a private firm and wants to prosper in it. When she makes the discovery that her mother's wealth comes from prostitution she is shocked. The discussion scene between Vivie and her mother is very famous. Vivie can excuse her mother for becoming a prostitute due to poverty. But why has she continued in this profession after gaining wealth ? She refuses to accept a penny from her mother. She will have nothing to do with her mother who represents the dirt of modern society. She refuses to marry Frank Gardner who proposes to her. She wants to work in the firm which she has joined and make a career for herself.

Mrs. Warren is a dominating character. But Vivie is the new woman. She is a strong willed, anti-romantic, career

woman. The discovery of her mother's profession has shattered all her illusions and she wants to have nothing to do with our "respectable" society.

The play was banned by the British censors.

The Philanderer

This play (written in 1893) is a satire on marriage. Shaw felt that the institution of marriage had outgrown its utility. It is now responsible for "grotesque sexual compacts". Marriage according to Shaw, means economic slavery for the woman and sexual slavery for both man and woman.

In this play two women, Grace and Julia, are in love with one man—Leonard Charteris. Being a man of "Advanced thinking" he philanders with both. Grace loves Charteris but refuses to marry him because it will make her "the property" of her husband.

The characters in this play are lifeless but the dialogue is very witty and interesting.

The play introduces us to the typical Shavian belief that woman is the hunter and man the hunted. Shaw also feels that a woman is happier if she lives with a man unwed than as his legal wife.

Shaw makes very interesting comments on the medical profession. Dr. Paramore has discovered one disease and he later finds that it did not exist at all. Shaw calls medical science a department of witchcraft.

Getting Married

This play is also on the problems of marriage. Shaw felt that the institution of marriage could be tolerated if men and women are economically independent of each other and if divorce is made easy, cheap and honourable.

Cecil and Edith are about to get married but Edith says that she can marry only if it is assured that she will be paid for her work of housekeeping and can get a divorce when she finds her husband committing some crime. Finally they are married when an insurance company agrees to arrange payment to the lady and the husband agrees to the condition regarding divorce.

Leo has got married. She loves her husband and another person also. She does not know what to do.

Lesbia Grantham does not like the slavery of married life but claims her absolute right to motherhood.

Conventional marriage cannot satisfy all these requirements.

You Never Can Tell

This play was written in 1895. Valentine is a poor man and Gloria is a rich girl. Valentine begins by flirting with her but soon they feel a powerful sexual attraction for each other which they cannot understand and cannot resist. They get married. Here the man is the hunter and the woman the hunted.

This drama also shows one aspect of the relations of parents with their children. Mr. & Mrs. Crompton are living separately. The children live with the mother. The mother is too much engrossed with the children and they do not respect her. When the father comes after eighteen years he is a complete stranger and so the children do not sespect him at all. Now it is impossible for them to live together as a family.

Arms and the Man

This is an anti-romantic comedy. It throws a floodlight of reason on the problems of war and love. Raina is a young girl who is highly sentimental. Her idea of war is that it is a noble game of brave heroes. News has just come of a great victory and the hero of this battle was Sergius to whom Raina was engaged. He had led a cavalry charge against a battery of machine guns. The enemy soldiers are now pursued through the streets of this town.

One of the refugees climbs over the pipe and enters Raina's bed-room He frightens her and takes possession of her cloak. He tells Raina that Sergius deserved to be court-martialled for his cavalry charge because if a single gun had fired, he and all his men would have been killed The guns could not be fired because the ammunition was wrong. This officer (Bluntschli) tells Raina that nine soldiers out of ten are born fools. He is in a bad state because he has not slept or eaten for the last 48 hours. Raina protects him almost falls in love with him and sends him back in the uniform of her father.

When he comes back he appears to be a perfect officer. He has all the officer-like qualities. These are all the qualities of a businessman. As compared to him Sergius looks like a fool.

Raina and Sergius pretend that there is a "higher love" between them. But behind her back Sergius kisses Louka, the maid-servant. This love proved to he humbug. When Bluntschli learns that Raina is 24 years old he offers to marry her. Sergius married Louka.

Thus it is shown that war is a game of butchery in which success can be obtained by proper organization and professional training and not by sentimental bravery. Marriages should be based on practical considerations and not on "higher love".

Then news comes that Bluntschli's father has died. He has inherited a vast amount of wealth. When Raina's mother hears about his wealth, she asks him, "Are you the Emperor of Switzerland". He replies "Madam, I have the highest rank known in my country. I am a common citizen".

The dialogue in this play is very witty. The characters of Bluntschli, Raina & Louka are will drawn. The situations are very comic. War and love are shown in their true light devoid of false sentiments.

Bluntschli is Shaw's superman hero. He is brave but not foolhardy. He works on instinct and is "self-acting". Shaw shows his greatness by contrasting him with romantic fool, Sergius.

Candida

Candida was written in 1894 and first presented in 1897. It has always delighted audiences with its witty dialogue and amusing situations in the midst of its serious theme. Here Shaw has treated the theme of the eternal triangle in a new way.

Candida is the charming wife of Rev. James Maror Morell, a Christian socialist clergyman who is always in demand for his popular lectures. He loves his wife and depends entirely on her. Candida is Morell's wife, mother and sister rolled into one. To the outside world Morell appears to be respectable and noble-minded but for his wife he is a tyrant and a bore. She is his economic slave and a drudge. Marchbanks, a poet with an effiminate charm, falls in love with Candida and almost worships her. He is a foolishly romantic youth, only eighteen years old. He grows faint at the thought of a poetic delight like Candida peeling potatoes and onions.

Candida is a great woman. She is responsible for Morell's success. Without her he would have been nowhere.

When Morell asks Candida to choose between the two of them, she chooses her husband *because he is the weaker of the two.*

The play exalts the ideal of service. Candida chooses to serve her husband rather than go with her romantic worshipper. Shaw said that Candida was an attempt at the evocation of the sentiment of "Virgin Mother".

Marchbanks finally goes out into the night because he has seen a conventional, happy marriage and he realizes that there is no poetry in it. This life is not for him. Candida has chosen a happy conventional life. He wants to lead a noble life without happpiness.

In Candida Shaw has given us true art without entangling in his unconventional ideas. Against his own principles he has allowed his play to end in a conventional manner.

Next only to *Saint Joan*, this is Shaw's most popular play.

The Man of Destiny

This One-act play contains the picture of a superman taken from history. The superman is Napoleon and the episode that show has dramatised is a fictitious one. The play does not show Napoleon's exploits on the field of battle. Here Napoleon is engaged in a duel of wits with an unnamed lady. Shaw thinks that Napoleon's greatness consisted in his utter disregard of conventional morals and values.

The scene is laid in an Italian hotel. Napoleon's wife had written a letter which proved her infidelity to her husband. By mistake this letter had come to Napoleon in the Government despatches. This lady was a friend of Napoleon's wife and she wanted to steal this letter so that it should not be read by Napoleon. She was afraid that if Napoleon read this letter he would cut off all relations with his wife.

Napoleon triumphs over this lady due to his realistic morality. His will is so strong that he cannot be moved by any passion. She is working for a false ideal—the peace of a family. Napoleon, on the other hand, is wholly selfish. So Napoleon's realism is pitted against that lady's idealism. Napoleon has tremendous self-control. He cannot be flattered. He is too great, too self-centred to lose his balance if he comes to know

about his wife's infidelity. There would be no ruined home, no scandal and no duel with his wife's lover. She realizes that there was no need to steal the letter because even if Napoleon read it there would be no harm. He does not have the conventional ideas of honour and dishonour. He is not a slave of passion. He is not moved by the lady's beauty. He is unromantic. For him a lady is only a female. He is unchivalrous. He seizes her by the wrist and drags her about. He does not bother if he is seen with her in a lonely hotel by his wife or anyone else. He has no decency. His will is so strong that he is not moved by any passion. He is indeed Shaw's superman.

In this play Shaw makes Napoleon make his famous statement about the English. "When he (the Englishman) wants a thing, he never tells himself that he wants it. He waits patiently until there comes into his mind, no one know how, a burning conviction that it is his moral and religious duty to conquer those who have got the thing he wants. Then he becomes irrestible . . . . . . and he takes the market as a reward from heaven".

Caesar And Cleopatra

This play is Shaw's reply to the sexual romanticism of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. It deals with the conquest of Egypt by Julius Caesar four years before his murder.

Caesar is a rather prosaic man of 50. Cleopatra is at this time a girl of 16. Caesar finds her crouched on a moonlit night, between the paws of the Sphinx in the desert where she has fled to escape the invading Romans. She is ready to believe that the Romans have trunks, tusks, tails and seven arms, each of which carries a hundred arrows.

Julius Caesar finds that his great rival, Pompey, had been killed at the instigation of Pothinus. Pothinus has banished Cleopatra. Caesar takes Cleopatra's side. Cleopatra (who is known to us as a romantic and glorious lover) is represented as a little madcap of a girl tyrannised over by an old nurse. Caesar develops her self-confidence. After all the intrigues and fights when Caesar leaves Egypt, Cleopatra is a self-possessed woman capable of ruling her kingdom. She has lost her girlish charm but has not become a charming woman. Caesar was moved by her sex-appeal but was not in love with her. She does not love Caesar but is waiting for the arrival of Antony.

Caesar is one of the greatest experiments of the Life Force,

He is the embodiment of reason. The mortal part of Caesar was concerned with wars and conquests but his immortal part was concerned with noble thoughts. It is his self-control which enables him to conquer the world. Once he makes up his mind to do a thing, nothing can deflect him from his path. He loves books but he burns the great Library of Alexandria to keep the Egyptians busy while he is taking possession of the island of Pharos. He is a conqueror but at heart he hates murders. He tells Cleopatra, "To the end of history murder shall breed murder, always in the name of right and honour and peace, until the gods are tired of blood and create a race that can understand". Caesar could rule with mercy and without revenge.

As *A. C. Ward* has said, "the play provides excellent entertainment for the mind and ear and eye but it requires more effective organization".

This is a typical anti-romantic comedy. Caesar is Shaw's superman here.

Man And Superman

Shaw wrote '*Man And Superman*' at the suggestion of his friend, A. B. Walkley, who wanted him to write a play on the Don Juan theme. Don Juan appears in a Spanish legend. He pursued and betrayed many women, the, foremost among whom was Donna Anna whose father he killed in aduel. Shaw reversed the theme and made woman the pursuer and man the quarry. The purpose of the Life Force is to create better and better human beings and woman is its agent for the achievement of this purpose. She must catch a man who will be the father of her children and who will provide nourishment to her and her children. Woman is thus the prime mover in Nature's purpose. His Don Juan (John Tanner) is to be ensnared by Ann Whitefield against his conscious will. The play is thus based on Shaw's theory of Creative Evolution.

Mr. Whitefield has died leaving behind his wife and two daughters. Octavious Robinson and his sister Violet are his adopted children. He has made Ramsden, an elderly businessman, and John Tanner joint guardians of his daughters. The will has actually been dictated by Ann who has decided to marry Tanner. Violet shocks everyone because she is in the family way and she refuses to reveal who the father of her child is. Tanner alone supports her because she is fulfilling

Nature's creative purpose. But it soon appears that she has married a young American, Hector Malone, who is the son of a millionaire.

Shaw has introduced a new type of working man, Henry Straker, the Chauffeur, who has fine views on education and progress and delights in modern machinery.

Tanner thought that Ann was in love with Octavius but Straker tells him that she wants to marry him. He tries to run away from her and flees to the continent in his car. He is stopped at the Sierra by brigands. He goes to sleep and has a dream. This is the famous 'Don Juan in Hell' Scene. In this scene we have Don Juan (Tanner), Danna Anna (Ann Whitefield), the ghost of Anna's father and the Devil. There is a long discussion of Shaw's favourite ideas. Everything is turned topsy-turvy. Heaven is a boring place while Hell is full of delights. It is full of the Seven Deadly Virtues. The Devil argues that human beings are stupid and love death. Nothing can save them from destruction. Don Juan claims that, on the contrary, there is in Man a spirit—the Life Force which is leading him towards the evolution of the superman.

Ann pursues Tanner to the continent and catches him there. He agrees to marry her. Tanner says, "What we have both done this afternoon is to renouce happiness, renounce freedom, renounce tranquillity, above all, renounce the romantic possibilities of an unknown future, for the cares of a household and a family".

In the words of A. C. Ward, Shaw in this play "established in English drama a new genre—the Comedy of Purpose—and demonstrated that it could be as entertaining as the Comedy of Manners, and incomparably more satisfying to the metaphysical appetite."

Major Barbara

Barbara is a young girl who is a Major in the Salvation Army. Her father, Mr. Uudershaft, is a big manufacturer of arms. Her mother, Lady Britomart, is the aristocratic daughter of the Earl of Stevenage. She had separated from her husband but her children are brought up with the money provided by him. Adolphus Cusins, a professor of Greek, loves Barbara and so he has started playing the bass drum in the Salvation Army band.

Capitalists like Bodger, Lazarus and Undershaft are actually responsible for poverty and disease but they give money generously to hospitals and religious institutions like the Salvation Army so that the thoughts of the workers should be turned towards heaven and they should not think of socialism and revolution.

Major Barbara realizes that she has been brought up on the money provided by a maker of arms. He tells her, "I fed you and clothed you and housed you. I took care that you should have money enough to live handsomely—so that you could be wasteful, careless, generous. That saved your soul from the Seven Deadly Sins . . . . I enabled Barbara to become Major Barbara and I saved your soul from the crime of poverty."

The tragedy of Major Barbara consists in her realisation of two facts :—

(a) Institutions like the Salvation Army survive only with the money provided by capitalists. "The temple of God has to be built by Mammon". She is shocked when the Salvation Army accepts her father's cheque.

(b) An individual can have no religion so long as he is poor. Poverty is the great evil. It keeps the person open to temptation and so leads to other crimes. She realises that the Salvation Army only bribes people with bread. People like Snobby Price join the Salvation Army only because they are hungry and once their hunger is satisfied they start committing crimes.

In utter agony she cries out, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me ?" She resigns from the Salvation Army, and joins her father's factory. Poverty degrades a person. She can save the souls of his workers who are not poor.

The play thus shows us the power of the capitalists. They finance religions which in the last analysis are founded on bribery. The remedy is to abolish private property. The "crime" of poverty must be eliminated from the face of the earth.

The Doctor's Dilemma

This play was written and produced in 1906. In this play Shaw deals with the problems of the medical profession. Shaw's idea was that diseases were caused by poverty and overwork among the poorer classes and too little work among the

leisured classes. It was the duty of the state to make arrangements for the treatment of diseases. Nothing is more dangerous than a poor, private doctor who lives on the diseases of others. Such a person is bound to develop a vested interest in the ill health of the public. Diseases should be prevented rather than left to be cured by private doctors.

In the play we find that a medical specialist, Colenso Ridgeon, has found a new Opsonin treatment for tuberculosis. For this achievement he has been knighted. The other specialists come to congratulate him. They waste time in social talk while patients are waiting. Each one of them has a pet theory. One feels that all diseases can be cured by vaccination. Walpole believes that all diseases are caused by the "Nuciform Sac" and can be cured by its removal.

Dubedat is a talented artist who is suffering from tuberculosis. When his wife, Jennifer, hears about Sir Colenso's great discovery she comes to him. The eminent doctors meet Dubedat and are charmed by his personality and telent and agree that he is a man worth saving. But soon they discover that Louis Dubedat is an unscrupulous scoundrel. He is immoral in his relations with women and does not return the money which he borrows freely from friends. Meanwhile Sir Colenso meets his old acquaintance, Dr. Blenkinsop, an humble general practioner among the poor. He is also suffering from tuberculosis.

Dr. Ridgeon finds that he can admit only one patient for his Opsonin treatment. The dilemma before him is whether he should admit Dubedat who has talent but is a scoundrel or Blenkinsop who is a good man but has no talent. But Ridgeon does not decide this question on its merits. He has fallen in love with Jennifer. So he admits Blenkinsop and turns over the case of Dubedat to Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonnington, which is as good as signing his death warrant. Blenkinsop is cured while Dubedat dies. Jennifer marries again but not Dr. Ridgeon. For him it proves to be a useless murder.

But in spite of this diversion from the main theme, the play is a fine satire on the medical profession. The character of Dubedat is unconvincing but the doctors are well drawn. By depicting the blunders and whims and fads of doctors Shaw tries to show that the medical science, as practised in his day, was no better than a branch of witchcraft.

Androcles and the Lion

This is a short play which amuses adults and children alike. It takes us to the time when the Christians were being persecuted by the Romans. Androcles is a Christian but his wife, Megaera, is not. They had to leave home because the Christians were regarded as "dirty, disreputable, blaspheming atheists" by many including Megaera. They have to run to the jungle because of the persecution. Megaera trips over the lion. Androcles tells his wife to run while he faces the lion. He tells her that the lion will take at least twenty minutes to eat him. During this time she will be able to escape. But the lion is suffering because of a big thorn in its paw. He takes out the thorn and the lion becomes his friend. They dance together and run up to Megaera.

The Christians are brought to Rome. They refuse to sacrifice to the Roman gods and so they are to be killed in the arena.

The Roman captain who takes the Christians for their execution does not understand why people should die for their faith. Lavinia is brave Christian woman. Spintho is a sinner who wants to attain salvation by dying as a Christian martyr. He runs away, burns incense but is eaten up by a lion. Ferrovius is a giant. He kills the gladiators and thus gets the release of all the Christian prisoners except Androcles. Androcles is thrown before a lion but the lion happens to be the same one whose thorn he had taken out. So he comes out dancing with the lion.

The Emperor is a figure of fun. Shaw shows in this play that the Christians were not persecuted because of a conflict of religions. It was a conflict of social forces. The Romans were not religious fanatics. They persecuted the Christians because the latter did not do what everyone else did. They did not regard the Emperor as divine. They did not burn incense in temples. They did not sacrifice before the gods. They talked of moral and social values which threatened the vested interests of the Romans. The Romans enjoyed killing the Christians as hunters enjoy killing innocent animals.

Pygmasion

In 1912 Shaw wrote Pygmalion. It is actually a lecture on phonetics and a plea for reform in English sqellings. Starting from this dry subject Shaw wrote this interesting and popular

play. It shows the transformation that can be brought about in a person's life by teaching him or her to speak correctly and behave properly. Shaw has based his play on the old Greek myth of Pygmalion. He was a sculptor who made a very beautiful statue of a maiden and called it Galatea and fell in love with it. Aphrodite give life to this statue and Pygmalion and Galatea were married and lived happily ever after.

Shaw's Pygmalion is a teacher of Phonetics named Henry Higgins. He meets a poor flower girl, Eliza Doolittle. She speaks the London cockney dialect. He also meets Colonel Pickering who has come from India. He had specialised in Sanskrit dialects. Higgins takes a bet wilh colonel Pickering that if he trains that flower girl he can transform her to such an extent that she can pass off as a duchess in an Ambassador's party. Eliza is taken into their house and the training starts. Col. Pickering treats Eliza as his adopted daughter and for Higgins Eliza is a sort of speaking machine who has to be trained. Higgins wins his bet. Eliza has learnt to speak correct English and to behave like a duchess in an Ambassador's party. Normally we would have expected Pygmalion to marry Galatea but Higgins has no feelings. He tells Eliza to stay in their house or to go where she likes. She is miserable. She cannot go back to her old life and she cannot be accepted in higher society. She has deep feelings for the professor but he is curiously insensitive to sexual emotions. He does not love young women because he finds in them poor rivals to his own mother. Higgins is a god and Eliza is his creation. An abyss separates them.

After the play ends Shaw tells us that Eliza married Freddy, a penniless youngman who loved her passionately. They had great financial difficulty. Then with the help of a grant from Col. Pickering they open a flower shop in a fashionable locality. But neither of them knew how to keep accounts and how to make bills. They attended classes. Finally they made a success of their shop.

Thus the play does not end as a romance as the readers expected and wished. It ends in a typical shavian anti-sentimental way.

Back to Methuselah

This is a long play in five parts and covers nearly ninety thousand words. It is not an ordinary play. Shaw called it "A Metabiological Pentateuch"

It is "metabiological" because the concept of evolution in this play goes beyond the conventional theory of Darwin. It is called "Pentateuch" because it is in five parts corresponding to the five parts of the Bible to which it adds some information in Shaw's own way.

This is a thesis play on the subject of creative evolution. There is no action—it is all talk mostly in the form of speeches. It has remained a play for the study rather than for the stage. It covers a great span of time. Part one takes place in the days of Adam and Eve in the gardan of Eden and the last part takes us to the year 31920.

At first Adam thought that he would live for ever. But he sees a dead fawn and gets the idea of death. The serpent whispers to Eve that there is a way to escape extinction and that is by the birth of young ones. Adam says "I do not like myself. I want to be different ; to be batter ; to begin again and again ; to shed myself as a snake sheds its skin." This was his desire for evolution. Since then Nature has been pursuing the course of evolution and shaw's idea is that it will finally result in the disappearance of matter and the emergence of pure thought alone.

The second part brings us to the years after the first World War. All sorts of evils have come in the society of the short lived men. Shaw mercilessly caricatures two British Prime Ministers—Asquith and Lloyd George. People have become the slaves of creeds and dogmas and have all but killed the creative Will. Barnaby brothers have found out that men can live longer—up to three hundred years—if they will it strongly enough. That is the way to save our civilization.

The third part is in the year 2170 A. D. "The Thing Happens". Two persons, a clergyman and a parlour maid have extended their lives. They are alive after two hundred and fifty years. One has become an archbishop and the other the Domestic Minister of Britain. The two old young people plan to get married.

The fourth parth is in the year 3000 A. D. A new race of men has now come. They live as long as they like. The short-livers are also living side by side.

The fifth part is entitled "As Far as Thought can Reach" in the year 31920 A. D. Now children are born fully developed from eggs. At this time they are as developed as an 18 year

old person. Man is free of all the troubles. One of the artists has discovered how to make human beings but these are automatic beings who respond only to external stimuli. The Ancients cause them to die. The Ancients are trying to escape from the body of flesh and blood into pure thought.

At the end, in the darkness, Adam, Eve, Cain and the Serpent reappear as shadows. Lilith, who was the father and mother of Adam and Eve makes this prophecy :—

"Of life only is there no end though of its million starry mansions many are empty and many still unbuilt and though its vast domain is as yet unbearably desert, my seed will fill it and master its matter to its uttermost confines."

Saint Joan

This is a play on the life and martyrdom of Joan of Arc who liberated France from the British yoke but was burnt alive as a heretic, a sorceress and a witch Shaw treats her as a super woman who was guided by her instincts and was far ahead of her times. She was the first Protestant in the age when Roman Catholicism held sway all over Europe. She was also the pioneer of Nationalism in the age of feudal supremacy. It was, therefore, natural that the church and the feudal lords turned against her and got her killed. When a man with eyes comes to the land of the blind, their first reaction is that his eyes must be taken out.

Joan of Arc, called the Maid of Orleans, was born on the 6th of January, 1412 in the village of Domremy in the North-East of France. Her father was a well-to-do peasant. She did not receive any education.

At this time England was trying to conquer France. The Dauphin (Charles VII) was the king of France, but he was a weakling and the feudal lords were supreme in their own regions. France was not one nation and so the British succeeded in defeating individual lords and advancing into the land.

From the 13th year onwards Joan heard the voices of St. Catherine and St. Margaret. In 1428 the English laid the siege of Orleans Now the voices asked Joan to go and save France. Early in 1429 she went to Robert de Baudricourt and convinced him of her sacred mission. Then in a soldier's dress she went to the king. She was given some troops and under her leadership the French fought so bravely that the British were defeated. Charles entered Rheims and she crowned him king

at the Rheims Cathedral. The king now deserted her. The courtiers were jealous of her. On the 23rd of May, 1430 she was captured by the Burgundians and they sold her to the English for £ 10,000. She was tried by an ecclesiastical court. She said that the voices she heard were the voices of God. At one stage she signed a confession of guilt and she was sentenced to life imprisonment. But she took back this confession and was handed over to the secular power to be executed. She was burnt as a heretic and a witch in the public square of Rouen on the 31st May, 1431.

After her death, under her inspiration France became one nation. Charles VII and the French soldiers fought well and by 1453 the English were expelled from France. The case of Joan was reopened in an ecclesiastical court in 1455 and the judgment was reversed. In 1920 she was canonized by the Pope and declared a saint.

People are commonly shocked that a girl who united the French nation and inspired the people to fight against and defeat the British should have been burnt alive. Their natural reaction is that the judges who tried her were cruel and corrupt.

Shaw wrote this play after Joan had been canonized. Shaw was of the opinion that the opponents of Joan were neither corrupt nor cruel. They opposed her because her actions threatened their own interests. She said that she heard the voices of Cod and the saints and claimed her individual right to interpret the word of God. How could the church accept that ? The Pope was the representative of God on earth. If God speaks to anyone, He would speak to the Pope or his bishops. How could God speak to a simple village girl ? Cauchon, therefore, decided that these were the voices of the Devil and she was a witch.

When she spoke of France as a nation she threatened the rights and privileges of the feudal lords and so they all became her enemies. She antagonised the Generals by winning victories where they had accepted defeats. And she antagonised the courtires because they were jealous of the power and prestige acquired by this village girl in the court. It was, therefore, natural for all these persons to combine together to condemn her.

The finest part of this masterpiece is the Epilogue where Shaw shows that all the people connected with her have come

together and when they hear that she has become a saint they express their happiness and congratulate her. But the atmosphere is suddenly changed when Joan announces that she may come among them as a person. They all now think of their own interests and realize that she would dominate and threaten them once again. So they all go out one by one. Only the English soldier, who gave a cross to the Maiden when she was being burnt and who because of this gets a day off in the year from hell, remains. Even he goes away when the cock crows. Joan is left alone. Then Shaw makes her say :

> "O God that madest this beautiful earth, when will it be ready to receive Thy Saints ? How long, O Lord, how long ?"

When Mahatma Gandhi was murdered by one of his own countryman, Shaw said, "It is dangerous to be too good".

Shaw calls Joan a "half witted genius and a "semisuper woman" because though she was a pioneer of nationalism and Protestantism, she did not realize the far-reaching implications of her own ideas.

The Apple Cart

The Apple Cart is Shaw's last important play. It was written in 1629. It presents the problems of democracy and constitutional Monarchy.

The play is set in the palace of King Magnus who is the constitutional monarch of England towards the end of the 20th Century. The country is in the grip of big capitalists who supply luxury goods to the whole world. There is no poverty. Everyone is well off. People have stopped taking interest in politics. A general election has just taken place but only 7% of the people cast their votes.

A Labour government has come into power. The government is annoyed with the king because he is not behaving as a constitutional monarch but is delivering speeches. The government serves him with an ultimatum that he must not deliver any more speeches and must surrender the royal veto. The king offers to abdicate the throne and announces his intention to stand as a private citizen for election to Parliament in the next general election. That upsets the Ministry's apple cart. They are sure that he will be elected and with the massive mandate of the people he will become a virtual dictator. So the govern-

ment withdraws its ultimatum and requests the king to remain as he is.

Shaw had explained the purpose of the play in his preface. "The conflict," says Shaw, "is not really between royalty and democracy. It is between both and plutocracy, which, having destroyed the royal power by frank force under democratic pretexts, has bought and swallowed democracy. Money talks, money prints, money broadcasts, money reigns ; and king and labour leaders alike have to register its decrees, and even, by a staggering paradox, to finance its enterprises and guarantee its profits . . . . Ministers who are socialists to the backbone are as helpess in the grip of Breakages Ltd., as its acknowledged henchmen".

Shaw's solution is that the government should be carried on by people who are trained both for government and citizenship and who are controlled by their conscience.

6

SHAW AND THE DRAMA OF IDEAS

The Drama of Ideas or the Problem Play is a play which is primarily concerned with the discussion of a problem. The plot and the characters are selected in such a way as to bring out different aspects of the problem which the play is meant to present.

The traditional plays were concerned with human emotions. The dramatist tried to take some men and women from real life, showed them in a certain emotional state and then built the plot round some conflict. Thus the plot of Shakespeare's *Othello* is based on jealousy. Othello is a black moor who is a General in the Venetian forces. He falls in love with a beautiful, white Venetian girl called Desdemona. She is also in love with him. They get secretly married against the wishes of her father. They are very happy for some time. Then a villain, Iago, plants an idea in his mind that Desdemona is in love with another person. This makes him very angry and he kills her. Then he discovers that she was innocent and so he kills himself. Shakespeare's other tragedy, *Macbeth*, is based on ambition. Macbeth is a good man but he is very ambitious. He kills the king and becomes the king of Scotland. He is suspected by some persons. He kills them too. This goes on till a time comes when he is hated by everyone in Soctland. His nobles all revolt against him and join the rightful heir to the throne who finally comes and kills Macbeth. Shakespeare is considered the greatest dramatist because he knew how to create living men and women and he could express their emotions in sublime poetry.

The Norwegian dramatist, Ibsen changed all that. He started writing his plays based on social, political, ecnomic and demestic problems. The dialogue was not concerned with human emotions but with the discussion of a problem.

Shaw became Ibsen's most distinguished disciple in England. As a dramatic critic he defended Ibsen's methods. People told him that he was quite wrong. Discussions should take place in a debating society and not in a theatre. Shaw started writing plays only to show that great drama could be based on the discussion of problem. In his first play, *Widowers' Houses*, he presented a discussion of slum landlordism. He showed that not only the landlords but all others, including many members of the audience, were directly or indirectly responsible for the poor slum-dwellers. His next play, *Mrs. Wareen's Profession* discusses the problem of prostitution. He shows that women become prostitutes because of poverty which is caused by capitalism. In the same way each one of his plays dicusses some burning problem of society. The play was only a vehicle of his ideas. It was only a device for getting the public to listen to his philosophy.

At first Shaw was bitterly criticised. His plays were called Fabian pamphlets. They were no better than "dramatic-sermons" or "dramatised conversations". But as time went on audiences and readers developed a taste for this type of drama. Dramatists like Galsworthy and serveal others started writing problem plays. The playwrights now began to write around a theme instead of merely making a story.

A dramatist like Oscar Wilde wrote his plays only to amuse an audience or the readers. Shaw and the playwrights of his type present a subject for serious thought. Very frankly Shaw said, "I write plays with the deliberate object of converting the nation to my opinions. . . . I have no other incentive to write plays". He was a philosopher, a propagandist and a dramatist all in one.

We can visualise the difference between the traditional drama and the drama of ideas if we consider Shaw's views on how *Othello* should have been written. He says, "*Othello* would be a prodigiously better play if it were a serious discussion of the highly interesting problem of how a simple Moorish soldier would get on with a "super-subtle" Venetian lady of fashion if he married her."

His own experience was that society was rotten to the core and he took upon himself the task of reforming all the evils. In order to admit fresh air one has first to blast the windows open. So he began with a merciless criticism of the various

evils of society and the state in his plays. Teaching was the goal of his art and he carried it on with missionary zeal.

Thus Shaw became the founder of the new Drama of Ideas or Problems. Regarding the purpose of his plays Shaw wrote, "I can no longer be satisfied with fictitious morals and fictitious good conduct, shedding fictitious glory on robbery, starvation, disease, crime, drink, war, cruelty, cupidity, and all the other commonplaces of civilization which drive men to the theatre and to make fooolish pretences that such things are progress, science, morals, religion, patriotism, imperial supremacy, national greatness and all the other names the news-papers call them."

In his plays Shaw threw the searchlight of reason on the problems of love and marriage, of capitalism and poverty and prostitutions, of war and religion and of the use of sex for the evolution of man into the superman.

Shaw felt that society had gone wrong because people had been carried away by their sentiments. In his plays he viewed the problems from the point of view of reason and intuition. The result was that the drama of ideas, of which Shaw was the father, became highly intellectual.

In order to appreciate the plays, the members of the audience had to take their brains to the theatre.

One difficulty about this type of drama is that the dialogue in which the different characters discuss a problem may become boring. When arguments are being given the speeches may become dull and dry. We go to see a play for entertainment but the long speeches only teach us and do not amuse us. This happens in the problem-plays of a dramatist like Galsworthy. But this does not happen in the plays of Shaw. He had a background of music and he had a superb mastery over the language. He selects his words and phrases in such a way that they immediately appeal to the brain and so even the long speeches do not appear to be dull.

It has also been said that the problem play would have only a temporary appeal. The problems may be regional or topical. The play may deal with a problem which is agaiting the minds of the people of a particular region. It would be popular in that area but would be of no interest to the people in the rest of the world. For example, a play dealing with the problem of Constitutional Monarchy would interest the British but it

would have no interest for people who abolished monarchy long ago.

The plays of Shakespeare and Kalidas have a universal appeal because they deal with the feelings of the human heart which are the same everywhere. But a play which deals with a problem will cease to be of interest when the problem comes to an end. For example, many of the problems that Shaw discusses in *the Doctor's Dilemma* have disappeared from England. It is a Welfare State now. The doctors no longer have a vested interest in the diseases of people. The state provides free medical treatment to all the citizens. The doctors not only cure the diseases but also try to prevent them. The treatment given by different dðctors does not depend on their feds but upon recognized medical systems. And no doctor now examines the moral worth of a patient before admitting him into the hospital.

All this is true but has the play ceased to be of interest to us ? Certainly not. *The Doctor's Dilemma* is acted and read even now with the same interest as before. The doctors created by Shaw are a charming lot and would amuse us for ever. B. B. with his charming blunders, Ridgeon with his "Opsonin" treatment and Walpole with his "Nuciform sac" will never cease to interest us. The dialogue is so full of wit and humour that it keeps the audiences amused from the beginning to the end. When B. B. says, "Walpole has no intellect. A mere surgeon. Wonderful operator ; but, after all, what is operating ? only Manual labour", we know that what he is saying is absurd but the statement will continue to amuse us for ever.

We may not agree that "nine soldiers out of ten are born fools" and that all soldiers are cowards and carry chocolates instead of cartridges to the battlefields. We may not agree with any statement of Shaw about soldiers but in spite of that *Arms and the Man* continues to be staged and read with delight not merely in civilian circles but also in military institutions. In our world women behave with great modesty and would never pursue their mates as Ann Whitefield pursues and marries Tanner but *Man and Superman* is read with delight by us all the same.

Thus the ideas on which some of the plays are based have become out-of-date but the plays still hold our attention on the stage and in the study because of their amusing situations, interesting characters and charming wit and humour.

7

SHAW'S CHARACTERIZATION

Shaw has created a large number of characters. Several of them have a strong individuality and appear to be really living beings. Some of them are not merely men and women but supermen who impress us with their new morality and an ideal way of thinking. But a large number of them are only puppets created to present the different points of view required in a discussion. Some of them are only mouthpieces of Shaw to express his views on the various social, economic, religious, domestic and political problems which face the modern man.

Characterization in Shakespeare

Characterization is the glory of Shakespearean drama. Shakespeare instinctively knew how people would think and feel and talk and behave in certain circumstances. He has created living men and women. In his plays action depends on character. A play results in a tragedy because there is some flaw in the character of the hero. Character is destiny in Shakespeare.

Characters Represent Ideas

Shaw, on the other hand, is a playwright with a purpose. He was a reformer and he wrote plays only to purge society of its various evils. He had definite ideas about the problems of the modern man from capitalism and evolution to marriage and prostitution and he wanted to convey his ideas to the public through the medium of his plays. Generally he introduced characters and situations only as pegs on which to hang his ideas. Some of the characters exist only to present certain attitudes or points of view in his debate-dramas. They are card-board figures and their existence is subservient to the themes or ideas that are being projected in those plays.

In order to present his ideas forcefully Shaw often creates types rather than individuals. For instance, Mrs. Warren's

a type of character drawn only to show the causes and evils of prostitution. *In The Doctor's Dilemma* the doctors are introduced only to ridicule the absurd theories and, practices of the medical profession. The cabinet ministers in *The Apple Cart* are only types of politicians. Undershaft in *Major Barbara* is only a spokesman of Shaw's idea that when a man is hungry salvation has no meaning for him. In *Pygmalion* Alfred Doolittle, the dustman, is introduced to express Shaw's point of view regarding middle class morality. In the beginning he is one of the "undeserving poor" and he is crushed down by middle class morality which believes that he does not deserve to get anything. When gets a fortune he feels that middle class morality has defeated him and he agrees to get married to his sixth mistress with a heavy heart. In *Arms and the Man* Sergius, Petcoff, Catharine and Raina are introduced so that their sentimental notions on love and war may be smashed by the searchlight of reason thrown on these problems by Shaw's superman-hero, Bluntschli. In *Saint Joan* Joan is portrayed as a dominant individual. But the Dauphin, Warwick, the Captain, the Archbishop, Stogumber and the Inquisitor are not individuals. They are important only for the functions that they perform in relation to Joan.

Contrast

In a play of Shakespeare the character of the hero is revealed through conflict. In the plays of Shaw there is no conflict. Character is revealed through contrast. For example, in *Man and Superman* the radical views of Tanner are brought out by contrasting them with those of Ramsden. The new morality of Bluntschli is brought into focus when it is contrasted with the false sentimentality of Raina and Sergius.

No Villains

In traditional drama the character of the hero is also brought out by contrasting him with a villain. Villains play an imporant role in world drama. But Shaw does not introduce any villain at all. There are no really wicked persons in his plays except in comic roles. That is because he feels that the trouble in moden life is caused not by bad men but by our social and economic system. The real villain is capitalism which ruins the lives of most of the men and women in our society.

Drama of the Upper Classes

Although Shaw was very democratic he did not base any of

his plays on the lives of the very poor. His characters are mostly upper class or middle class people. The reason perhaps was that he used to introduce a lot of wit and humour in his dialogues and he did not want the low class people to make fun of each other in his plays. He makes out of a case for the poor people by satirising the rich people who did not deserve their wealth. When he introduces a poor man in the society of the rich he does not let anyone make fun of him. In *Pygmalion* Alfred Doolittle appears to us to be a despicable character. He does not do work ; he drinks ; he keeps mistresses and wants to sell his illegitimate daughter to Higgins for £ 5. But Shaw calls him an original moralist and makes him his spokesman for his tirade against middle class morality. In *Man and Superman* he introduces a chauffeur, Straker. But he is not a low character at all He represents the class of mechanics who have become increasingly important in the industrial civilization of the Twentieth Century.

Female Characters

In Shaw's plays female characters play a dominant role. He has no timid heroines. They embody vitality of the race and are agents of the Life Force for the improvement of the race. He has no use for the sentimental goddesess of traditional romances. He has created sturdy, intellectual women like Candida and Joan. Vivie Warren is perfectly unsentimental and unromantic. She is the New Woman of the modern age. Ann Whitefield's pursuit of Tanner shows the role of woman in society : She is the hunter and man the hunted.

Defects

Many critics have said that Shaw's characters are not lifelike. They are not persons. They are only views of life. They are only mouthpieces of different philosphies or ways of thinking. His heroes do not progress from action to action. They are static. They only repesent a fixed point of view on the problem being discussed in the play.

Shaw has also been severely criticised for his delineation of women. His heroines have no grace or charm. He looks at woman as female sex running after the male in order to perpetuate and improve the race. The desire for mating seems to determine their entire conduct. This is not true to life. Girls may be interested in hunting for suitable husbands but they are by nature shy and modest and would never run after men in

the way Shaw's women do. As G. K. Chesterton has said, "The trap may catch the mouse but it is a little dfficult to imagine the trap running after the mouse."

Moreover, Shaw's women have no sex appeal. They are like Ibsen's sexless dolls. As Frank Harris has said, "Ann's pursuit of Tanner in *Man and Superman* has as much sex appeal as a Railway Time Table."

Immortal Portraits

In spite of what the hostile critics say, the readers of Shaw find all his characters credible. They perfectly fulfil the purpose for which they have been created. And his portraits of Caesar, Bluntschli, Joan of Arc, Higgins, Eliza, Capt. Shotover, Major Barbara and Marchbanks are really memorable and immortal creations. They are three diamensional figures and will ensure for Shaw a safe place among the great creators of the world.

8

SHAW'S PLOTS

Shaw does not attach much importance to plot. He constructs a story which is good enough to reveal his characters and convey his ideas. The result is that his plays do not have a complex plot and do not have much story interest. He himself said, "I avoid plots like the plague. . . . . My procedure is to imagine characters and let them rip". That is perhaps the reason why he did not succeed as a novelist.

Shakespeare and his contemporaries and successors constructed their plots very carefully. They began with Exposition in which the chief characters and the main theme were introduced. Then came the Rising Action in which all the complications were introduced resulting in the climax. Then the dramatist started resolving the conflicts if it was a comedy and preparing for final disaster if it was a tragedy. Finally the dramatist if he is writing a tragedy produces the Catastrophe in which all the characters face death or disaster. If he is writing a comedy his play ends in a Denouement in which generally the lovers meet and get married and everyone is happy at the end.

Shaw changed all that. His aim in writing plays was not to write interesting stories. He was a zealous reformer who wanted to change the ways of society. He used the dramatic medium only to convey his ideas to the public. He introduces a few characters and make them discuss the problem on which the play is based. There is no plot as such. There are only a few situations. Shaw himself said, "Formerly, you had in what was called a well-made play, an exposition in the first Act, a situation in the second, an unravelling in the third. Now you have Exposition, Situation and Discussion ; and the discussion is the test of the playwright. . . . The discussion conquered Europe in Ibsen's *Doll's House* ; and now the serious play-

wright recognizes in the discussion not only the main test of his highest powers but also the real centre of the play's interest."

Instead of a well-knit plot Shaw's plays are only full of startling situations. *The Doctor's Dilemma*, for example, consists of four episodes :

1. The follies and whims of doctors.
2. The dilemma before the doctor—should he undertake the cure of a person who is a talented artist but a scoundrel in personal life or of an ordinary good man who has no talent ?
3. Dr. Ridgeon's Courtship of the artist's wife and his disappointment.
4. The character of Louis Dubedat—a genius in art, but a blackguard in personal relationships.

Shaw's main theme in this play—the absurdities of the medical profession—is forgotten in the last three episodes.

Similarly *Arms and the Man* has no compact plot. It contains extremely witty dialogue in which the startlingly new ideas of the Shavian superman Bluntschli about war and love are presented before us.

The plot of *Pygmalion* consists of three parts. The First Part is the Exposition in which the main characters are introduced and Higgins takes the bet that in six months he can train a flower girl to talk and behave like a duchess. The Second Part is concerned with the conversion of the flower girl into a duchess. The Third Part is concerned with the conversion of the duchess into a living and energetic woman who throws the slippers at the lifeless Higgins and decides to marry the penniless Freddy who sincerely loves her.

Shaw also changed the traditional difference between tragedy and comedy. The dialogue in all his plays is full of wit and humour. His plays do not end either in a tragic catastrophe or in a happy denouement. Thus in *Candida* we expect that Candida would finally decide to go with her romantic lover and her husband Morrell would be left lamenting. But that does not happen. Candida chooses to stay with her husband who is the weaker of the two. In *Pygmalion* we expect that Higgins and Eliza will finally get married. But Shaw does not end this play in this conventional comic way. His pygma-

lion cannot marry his Galatea because he has never regarded her as a woman but only as a speaking machine.

Another innovation of Shaw is that he does not present any external conflict in his plays. Here we only find the conflict of ideas, of will power and of the sense of values. Shaw does his propaganda in all his plays by showing the clash between his new ideas and the old conventional ideas. In *Arms and the Man* he shows the contrast between the cold reasoning of Bluntschli and the false sentiments of Sergius. In *Pygmalion* he shows the conflict between human vitality and a lifeless professional system. After the Ambassador's party Eliza becomes a real, vital and living woman while Higgins remains the lifeless slave of his system of Phonetics. In *Saint Joan* Joan's ideas of Protestantism and nationalism are in conflict with the ideas of the custodians of the church and the French feudal system. In *Man and Superman* the strong will of Ann Whitefield finally conquers the weak resistance put up by Tanner. In *Major Barbara* the noble girl is shocked to find that even religious institutions depend upon the merey of Big Money. The conflict in Shaw's plays is mental and not physical.

Thus Shaw changed the whole concept of plot construction. The emphasis shifted from the story to the ideas. He showed that individual righteousness is of no use in the present social and economic set up. The evils in our life are not caused by villains but by the invisible force of capitalism. The real conflicts are mental and not physical. And Shaw showed that tragedy and comedy could exist side by side in the same play.

9

SHAW'S SUI GENERIS

Shaw introduced many innovations in his drama. When Henderson asked him about the nature of his plays he remarked that they were "Sui Generis"—Unique, of their own kind. They were not written according to any known classification. They were not bound by any "iron-clad" rules. He said, "I am not governed by principles ; I am inspired".

Debate-Drama

The construction of his plays is quite different from that of traditional dramatists. He said, "Formerly, you had in what was called a well-made play an Exposition in the first Act, a situation in the second, and an unravelling in the third. Now you have exposition, and situation and discussion". He started writing what might be called a "Debate-Drama". He said, "I write plays with the deliberate object of converting the nation to my opinions". He wrote plays to expose the various abuses of society. He was a philosopher, dramatist and propagandist, all in one.

Dramas of Life

But when critics said that his plays were only economic treatises or Fabian pamphlets, he did not agree. "My plays", he wrote, "are no more economic treatises than Shakespeare's. All my plays were written as plays of life, character and human destiny like those of Shakespeare and Euripides".

Instinct and Reason

He was an enemy of false sentiment but he did not believe in pure reason either. Instinct plays an important part in his plays. In *Man and Superman* Tanner does not fall in love with Ann . . . . He tries to run away from her but ultimately succumbs to the deadly instinct of the woman who, inspired by

the Life Force is hunting for a husband. Shaw's superman heroes like Napoleon, Caesar and Bluntschli, all work on instinct. And yet they are not whimsical in their ways. In some mysterious manner their instinct is imbued with reason.

Spectators on the Stage

Shaw said, "Shakespeare had put ourselves on the stage but not our situations. . . . Ibsen supplied the want left by Shakespeare. He gives us not only ourselves but ourselves in our own situations".

Shaw claimed that he made the spectators themselves the characters of his drama and the incidents of their lives its incidents. He has dramatised our problems and our situations. Thus in Widowers' Houses he made the spectators realise that not only the slum landlords but everyone of them derived his income in the last analysis from the exploitation of the poor slum dwellers.

Stage Directions and Prefaces

Shaw wanted that his plays should be enjoyed not only on the stage but also in the study. He, therefore, wrote elaborate stage directions and long prefaces. The Stage Directions not only describe what is to be put up on the stage but also the character and even the past life of the hero. The Prefaces discuss the issues in full detail. For example, his play *Androcles and the Lion* covers 44 pages but the Preface to it occupies 98 pages. He borrowed something from the technique of the novel and made his plays suitable not only to be acted but also to be read.

The Illusion of Life

He tries to give us the impression that what he is depicting is real life. So, although he gives detailed stage directions, he never mentions the stage, as that would remind the readers of the theatre and destroy the illusion of life.

Vertical Inversion

Occasionally Shaw heightens the humour in his dialogue by the device called "Vertical Inversion". Everything is turned topsy-turvy. With the help of his wit he turns white into black, good into bad, virtue into vice and right into wrong. For example, in the "Don Juan in Hell" scene in *Man and Superman* hell is shown as a place of all virtues and happiness and heaven is proved to be a boring place where nobody wants to

live. The Devil proves that man is in love with death. The Seven Cardinal virtues are changed into the Seven Deadly Sins. This is the triumph of Shaw's wit.

Dramatic Conflict

In the drama of the past conflict meant a clash of emotions involving intense emotional disturbances or violent physical action. In place of such conflicts Shaw brought the conflict of thought and belief. There is a clash of competing ideas and of opposing standards of values. There are also conflicts between social forces and men are the victims of these conflicts. But the violence of catastrophe is unknown in the plays of Shaw.

Tragedy and Comedy

But the biggest innovation of Shaw was that he combined in his plays two irreconcilable forms—Tragedy and comedy. The same play is humorous and serious. His witty discussions in his serious plays arouse laughter. The traditional tragedies used to end in a catastrophe. Shaw has no such end. In *Getting Married* after a serious discussion in which the worst things are said about marriage the play ends in a happy marriage. Sometimes he suddenty passes from the sublime to the ridiculous. After a serious discussions of noble principles he suddenly comes to the anti-climax of Farce. For instance, in *Man and Superman* Tanner bravely defends the conduct of Violet in acting on instinct as the agent of the Life Force and becoming pregnant without going through the formality of marriage. And then he collapses suddenly on learning that Violet is already married and the legitimacy of the child she bears is assured.

About the burning of Joan of Arc Shaw said, "The tragedy of such murders is that they are not committed by murderers ; and this contradiction at once brings an element of comedy into the tragedy ; the angels may weep at the murder but the gods laugh at the murderers."

Shaw felt that every play should be both serious and comic. In fact, he said that Shakespeare's tragedies should have been more comical and his comedies should have been more serious;

10

SHAW'S WIT AND HUMOUR

Comedian at Heart

Shaw had a natural gift of laughter. He was a comedian at heart. He wrote plays only to convey his ideas to the public. But if he had delivered serious sermons nobody would have listened to him. In spite of the fact that all the time he was proving the spectators and readers guilty of all the crimes under the sun, they listened to him only because of his wit and homour. "It is by jingling the bell of the jester," he observes, "that I, like Heine, have made people listen to me. All genuinely intellectual work is humorous".

Shaw was the biggest iconoclast of his age. He condemned all the conventions of society He shocked the public by showing that all their ideals were false sentiments, their heroes were monsters in reality, their gods were only idols and their religion was only superstition He did not distinguish between crime and punishment, between marriage and prostitution and between a financier and a burglar. He opposed Britain's war effort at a time when she was involved in a life-and-death struggle against Germany. And yet nothing happened to him. That was because he sugar coated his bitter pills with buoyant laughter. Prof. B. Ifor Evans has said, "Without humour the vision of life as he saw it would have led him to the scaffold as a revolutionary". It was humour that saved him.

Type of Humour

The difference between wit and humour is that wit is an intellectual play on words while humour arises from natural idiosyncracies of character and abnormalities of feelings. In the plays of Shaw we find mostly wit but there are many examples of humour also. But even this humour is fed by his thought. It is not laughter for its own sake as in the plays of

Oscar Wilde. Shaw's humour tickles us but does not send us to guffaws of laughter.

In *the Philanderer* Dr. Paramore has discovered a fatal disease on the basis of experiments on three dogs and one monkey and he has called it Paramore's Disease. Then on the basis of investigations by other doctors it is found that there is no such disease. When he hears that there is no such fatal disease he is not glad. On the other hand, he cries out in agony, "The worst of news ? Terrible news ? Fatal news ? My disease—the work of my life ;. . .it was all a mistake ; there was no such disease".

And is the patient who was supposed to be suffering from this disease happier ? No. He had been told that he had only one year more to live. Now he is told that he will live for many more years. Craven says to Dr. Paramore, "You don't half she how serious it is to make man believe that he has only another year to live . . . . I have made my will, which was altogether unnecessary ; and I have been reconciled to a lot of people I had quarrelled with, people I cannot stand under ordinary circumstances. . . . I have done a lot of serious thinking and reading and extra church-going. And now it turns out simple waste of time". He had been advised to give up meat eating and now he is told that that is not necessary. But he cannot eat meat now. He has elected Vice-President of the Vegetarian and Humanitarian societies.

In *Pygmalion* we find an example of the same type of humour. Alfred Doolittle is in revolt against conventional middle class morality. When he was a poor dustman he was very unhappy because he was always told that he did not "deserve" to get more although his needs were very great. But is he happier when he gets three thousand pounds a year ? No. He feels that he can no longer be happy. He is intimidated by middle class morality. "Happier men than me will call for my dust and touch me for their tips ; and I will look on helpless and envy them."

Shaw was very fond of making fun of his contrymen. In *the Man of Destiny* Napoleon makes the following statement : "When he (the Englishman) wants a thing, he never tells himself that he wants it. He waits patiently until there comes into his mind, no one knows how, a burning conviction that it is his moral and religious duty to conquer those who have got the thing he wants. Then he becomes irresistible. . . . he conquers that land and takes the market as a reward from heaven".

In *Caesar and Cleopatra*, Caesar says about Britannus (an Englishman) : "Pardon him Theodotus ; he is a barbarian and thinks that the customs of his tribe and island are the laws of nature". ·

When Caesar and his men swim form the lighthouse to their ship, Britannus is scared but remains dignified. He says, "Caesar, I am a man and a Briton, not a fish. I must have a boat. I cannot swim."

Wit

Shaw's dialogue is full of wit which is based on the clash of ideas on the various problems of society. As a critic has said, "His thoughts can hit like bullets, his emotions can explode like shells and a word-duel between a man and a woman can be more thrilling than throwing chairs about the room".

In *The Doctor's Dilemma* B. B. says about Walpole (who is a famous surgeon) ; "Walpole has no intellect. A mere surgeon. Wonderful operator ; but after all, what is operating ? only mannual labour". He says further about his name : "In moments of domestic worry, I am simply Ralph. When the sun shines in the home, I am Beedle-Deedle-Dumkins". In *Pygmalion* Higgins says of Eliza : "She is so deliciously low—so horribly dirty". He then instructs Mrs. Pearce to clean Eliza with Monky Brand, to burn all her clothes and to wrap her in brown paper until new ones arrive from she shop.

Notice the following dialogue from *Arms and the Man*. Mark the incisiveness of utterance.

Sergius : (*Fiercely delighted to find his opponent a man of spirit*) Well said, Switzer. Shall I lend you my best horse ?

Bluntschli : No : Damn your horse ! I thank you all the same, my dear fellow. (*Raina comes in, and hears the next sentence*) I shall fight you on foot. Horse-back's too dangerous : *I don't want to kill you if I can help it*.

Sometimes Shaw uses his wit to bring about what is known as "Vertical Inversion". He can turn things topsy turvy and make white look black. A good example of that is the Don Juan scene in *Man and Superman* where he makes us feel that hell is an ideal place and heaven is a dull and boring place. He

even turned the Seven Cardinal virtues into the Seven Deadly Sins.

Shaw's wit is often compared to that of Oscar Wilde. But Oscar Wilde's wit is a superficial sparkle while Shaw's wit goes to the depth of argument and character

Paradox

A paradox is a statement which appears to be absured on the face of it but which may have a truth underlying it. Shaw is a master of paradox. He believed in Jesus and his teachings but not in Christianity. He held that crime was only the retail department of what in wholesale is called law. He regarded science as a branch of witchcraft. A qualified medical practitioner was to him a quack and the General Medical Council was for him more reactionary and tyrannical than the 15th Century Inquisition Courts.

In *Pygmalion* Alfred Doolittle is a useless drunkard. He keeps mistresses. He goes to blackmail Higgins for taking away his illegitimate daughter. He virtually sells his daughter for £ 5. And yet this person is recommended by Higgins to an American millionaire as "the most original *moralist* at present in England".

Farce

Shaw's plots are full of sudden inversions, exaggerations and comic situations. *Caesar and Cleopatra* begins with an amusing incident. Cleopatra, the young queen of Egypt, has run away from her capital due to the fear of the invading Romans. Near the Sphinx she meets an unknown soldier to whom she describes Caesar as a man with a nose like an elephant's trunk, and the stranger (who is Caesar himself) "involuntarily rubs his nose".

Later Cleopatra is carried to Caesar wrapped in the carpets of Apollodorus.

Arms and the Man begins as a comedy of emotion but it soon becomes a string of farcical situations. We are told that a Cavalry charge succeeds because the leader's horse runs away. A battery of machine-guns is captured because it is discovered at the last moment that they had received the wrong ammunition. Nicola is supposed to be engaged to Louka, the mind servant. But he suddenly realises that she is too ambitious for his station in life Sergius suddenly jumps down from his

higher love for Raina to marry Louka. Sergius and Bluntschli bid for Raina by enumerating the number of forks, knives, blankets, table covers and horses that each one has. These are all farcical situations.

In *The Doctor's Dilemma* when Louis Dubedat is almost on his death-bed the appearance of the news-paperman creates a farcical sitution.

In *Man and Superman* Tanner bravely defends Violet's act in becoming a mother without entering wedlock. The Tanner collapses in an anti-climax of farce when it is discovered that Violet is already married and there is no doubt about the legitimacy of her child.

Satire

Shaw wanted to reform society. He wanted to expose the abuses and absurdities of the institutions, beliefs, and practices of his contemporaries. For this purpose he adopted the weapon of satire. By exaggerating the abuses he showed how absurd they were.

In *Arms and the Man* Shaw satirises the heroic conception of war and soldiering. He shows that every soldier is at heart a coward. Bravery in battle is proved to be the coward's art of attacking when he is strong and retreating when he is weak. The romantic idea about soldiering is knocked off when Bluntschli, a professional soldier, says 'Nine soldiers out of ten are born fools". Officers call their wives to maintain discipline in the army. At the end it is proved that the finest officer-like qualities are the qualities of a typical businessman.

The Doctor's Dilemma is a satire on the medical profession. Fach specialist has his own special theory about diseases and how to cure them. Ridgeon has his Opsonin treatment, while Walpole thinks that the removel of the Nuciform sac is the panacea for all ills. And when Louis Dubedat is dying due to the bungling of B. B., the latter finds it "a very interesting case'' and he wants to write a paper on it.

Conclusion

Thus Shaw was a past-master in all aspects of humour. When Tolstoy remarked that Shaw treated life as a joke, he replied that life was indeed a joke. He had the true humorist's gift of being able to laugh at himself. The big scoundrel in *the Doctors's Dilemma*, Louis Dubedat, says that he is a disciple of Shaw.

Other writers of problem plays discuss the problems seriously and so we are bored by them. But Shaw amuses us even while he dicusses a problem and so his plays, which are almost debates, are still popular as dramas. His humour is highly intellectual and so he wants the spectators to take their brains to the theatre. He grips their attention by his amusing situations and his wit and humour. He has been very appropriately called "a laughing philosopher".

11

SHAW'S DEFECTS

All Discussion

The function of drams is to show life in action. If this is the criterian for good drama. Shaw's plays appear to be very defective. He is very bitter about the evils of society and he uses drama as his medium for exposing those evils. His aim in writing plays was to reform society. The stage is used by him as a platform for his sermons. There is no remance, no colour, no emotion, no passion in his plays. They look like written debates. Discussion takes the place of action. The mind excludes the heart. The intellect takes the place of feelings.

Tagore felt that discussion is the poison that spoils all good art. Shaw sacrificed art for the needs of propaganda. "Drama", says Synge, "like the symphony, does not teach or prove anything". But Shaw wrote plays only to prove that the people were wrong in every way. The correct place for the discussion is the preface not the play. But for Shaw discussion was the essence of the play. That is why some critics described his plays as "Fabian pamphlets" or "staged pamphlets".

Problem Plays will not Last

The problem play or the drama of ideas presents different ideas about a problem. The characters present different aspects of the problem when they talk to each other on the stage. If the problem is agitating the minds of the people and if it is discussed in a witty and humorous manner, the audience will like the play. But if the problem ceases to interest people the play will lose much of its interest. Thus the problems of the medical profession which are presented in *The Doctor's Dilemma* have ceased to exist in Englend. If the play is enjoyed even now it is because of the interesting characters of the doctors and the witty

dialogue. The problem has only a historical interest for the British.

If the plays of Shakespeare or Kalidas interest us even now it is because they are based on life and character and human emotions which have not changed with the passage of time. But the problems of different ages and differnt countries are different. A play written on a problem which is agitating the minds of the people of a certain region at a particular time will be of no interest to the people of other countries or the people of a subsequent age who are facing different problems. Thus a play dealing with the problems of an affluent society will not even be understood in countries where starvation stalks the land. A drama dealing with the problems of a capitalist society will not interest people in a communist country. Shaw's plays dealing with problems will only last as long as those problems are live issues in the world.

Didactic Element

People go to the theatre to be entertained and not to be taught. But for shaw all great art is didactic. He wanted to refom the people by showing them where they had gone wrong. Everything else was subsidiary. In *Widowers' Houses*, for example, the evils of capitalism are exposed, but there is no dramatic event and no human element. There is no development of action and no conflict. It is an interesting sermon of the share of the people in the wrongs and injustice of scoiety. *Pygmalion* is an interesting lecture on Phonetics put in a dramatic form. This is true of most of Shaw's plays. Plays like *Man and Superman* and *Back to Methuselah* are meant to be read rather than acted.

No Story Interest

A good play generally consists of an interesting and well-knit story presented in action. Shaw's plays, however, have no story interest. He could not construct a complicated plot. Nothing happens in most of his plays. There is only talk. There are a few incidents which are so devised that they enable the characters to discuss the problems from various points of view. Shaw's plots are very feeble indeed.

Defects of Characterization

Shakespeare was able to create real human beings because he understood the workings of the human heart. Shaw suspected the emotions and relied only on reason and instinct. He,

therefore, could not create characters who should appear to be living men and women. His main aim was to propagate his ideas. His characters, therefore, became only different views of life. In *Arms and the Man* Bluntschli acts as the mouthpiece of Shaw in matters of war and love, and the rest of the characters exist only to have their sentimental ideas shattered by the realistic views of the superman hero. His characters are only thinkers and have no feelings at all.

Role of Women

Shaw had a poor idea of the role of women in life. He regards women as only the female sex. He thinks that women get married only to produce children. He has no idea that marrige can lead to happiness. He has not created one really charming woman like Desdemona or Viola. Woman has been picked up by the Life Force as the agent for the betterment of the race. For the production of children and for looking after them she needs man. So Shaw represents woman as the hunter and the man as the hunted. But this pursuit of men by women does not result in any love scenes in his plays. That is because his women have no sex appeal. They are like Ibsen's sexless dolls. As Frank Harris has said, "Ann's pursuit of Tanner in *Man and Superman* has as much sex appeal as a Railway Time Table".

Attitude towards Sex

Many critics have condemned Shaw as a sensualist because of his attitude towards sex. Shaw was against marriage because it results in sexual bondage for both husband and wife. He wanted that people should act on instincts and indulge in sex without marriage. He separated sex from pleasure and treated it as the urge given to men and women for the creation of a better race of men. But Shaw did not realize that if men and women had free sex relations without marriage they would be no better than animals.

Evolution—No Emotions and no Happiness

Shaw's own early experience made him anti-sentimental. He did not get any affection from his parents or relatives. He got no sympathy from anyone in London. He had to pass his early years in poverty. Fabian socialism taught him that society is governed by economic forces. So he could not understand human feelings at all. When he started thinking of evolution, he got the idea that as man evolves into the superman

his feelings will be dropped and he will work only on reason and instincts. This is a perverted view of evolution. Actually in the course of evolution nature has developed the emotions of man. Man is superior to animals because of his emotions and his capacity to be happy. But Shaw believes in betterment and not happiness His superman will have "intellectual ecstasy" and not the rapture of delight.

Shaw had no idea of the warm emotional attachment between men and women. He has emphasized only the physical relationship between them. In his world there would be no deep emotional attachment and no happiness.

Religious people believe that the highest stage of evolution would be reached when the human soul has communion with the Universal Soul or God. But Shaw has no idea of religion. So his theory of evolution will create human beings who have a developed brain but no heart or soul.

Shaw's Superman

Shaw's superman heroes do not behave any better than others who are guided by convention and sentiment. Shaw says that these superman act on instincts. In practice they would act only on their whims.

Shaw says that the superman has 'intellectual ecstasy.' This is a very vague term and we do not know what Shaw meant by that. Among his superman-heroes, Joan is not intellectual and she does not understand the far-reaching implications of her beliefs. Caesar and Bluntschli do not have much ecstasy. His Napoleon has no sense of shame. He is not worried about his wife's infidelity. He does not really love his wife and so he is not jealous when he comes to know that she loves some one else.

New Philosophy

Shaw claimed that he had evolved a new philosophy and given the world a new religion. But his philosophy of the Life Force and creative evolution would result in a life in which the divine principles of love, romance and idealism have been replaced by dry intellectualism, free sex and whimsical behaviour based on instincts. Actually he was obsessed with sexual and economic problems and could not even think of the beauty and sweetness of human relationships.

Not true to Life

Because of these defects of his way of thinking, the world

pictured in his plays is not true to our real life. In our world Sergiuses generally marry Rainas and not Loukas. Girls may have a strong desire to get married but they would never pursue men in the shameless way in which Ann pursues Tanner. Our girls are generally bashful and modest.

In same of his plays he gives his interpretation of facts which are not wholly true to life. For example, his idea in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* is that women become prostitutes because of their poverty. But this is not true in every case. Some women adopt this profession because they love variety, others because they love excitement and some others may have chosen this life as a change from the dull and monotonous life at home.

In *Pygmalion* it would have been most natural and life-like for Higgins to finally marry Eliza. But Higgins has the typical Shavian anti-sentimental spirit. Eliza was for him a speaking machine and not a woman. He has no feelings. So she decides to marry Freddy. This is not true to life.

No Tragedy

Some of the world's greatest dramas are tragedies. Shakespeare has written some very hilarious comedies but his greatest plays are the four great tragedies. For writing a great tragedy the dramatist should be able to fathom the full depth of human emotions. Shaw distrusts the emotions. His dialogue in every play is full of intellectual wit and humour. So he could not write a tragedy. For the same reason we do not find any poetic touch in his writings.

Conclusion

Because of his lack of feeling the readers generally find Shaw cold and unsympathetic. He appeals to our minds but does not touch our hearts.

Robert Withington has summed up his criticism of Shaw in the following words :

> "Can anyone who bases his philosophy on Economics, Socialism and Biology, who has a preconceived idea of human nature, and who has no appreciation of poetry, be truly great."

12

SHAW'S STAGE DIRECTIONS

Shaw started the vogue of giving detailed stage directions in his plays. At the beginning of an Act these directions occupy a page, some-times more. He wants to be accurate about the time and the place. Thus at the beginning of the action in *Pygmalion* he tells us that the time is 11.15 p.m. The people have taken shelater in the portico of a Cathedral. He tells us that the church is not Wren's cathedral but Inigo Jones's Church in Covent Garden Vegetable and Flower Market. Then he gives details of the places in the portico occupied by the various persons.

The purpose of giving details of a person's house or room is to give us an idea of his nature, his interests and his station in life. A person's character is revealed by the arrangement of the room, the type of furniture and the books and other equipment kept there. For example, the room of Higgins shows that he is experimenting with speech sounds. There are machines for recording and reproducing sounds. There is a model of a human head for demonstrating the functioning of the vocal organs. So before one word is spoken, we know the type of person who lives here. He has converted his drawing room into his laboratory. That gives us an idea that phonetics is his passion. His mother's Drawing Room, on the other hand, is decorated in the 19th Century style according to the taste of an old and cultured lady. There are wall papers and curtains such as were designed by Morris and Burne Jones. There are oil paintings purchased from an exhibition thirty years ago. There is one Chippendale chair and one chair carved in the style of Inigo Jones.

These stage directions give a clue to the character of the

person who is to appear before us. The person's approximate age, manners, appearance and dress are also described in detail.

All this is meant to help the director when he is putting up a play on the stage. He gets a complete idea of how the stage is to be arranged, what type of persons are to be selected to play the different roles and what dresses they ought to wear.

Sometimes his descriptions go beyond the requirements of the Director. For instance, he gives the past history and actions of the Character. Thus we are told that Higgins "is of the energetic, scientific style, heartily, even violently interested in everything that can be studied as a scientific subject, and careless about himself and other people, including their feelings. . . . His manner varies from genial bullying when he is in good humour to stormy petulance when anything goes wrong; but he is so entirely frank and void of malice that he remains likeable even in his least reasonable moments".

Now, how can the Director arrange the make-up of the actor in such a way that these things become clear to an audience before he has spoken one word ?

The Director cannot do it and he is not meant to do it. Most of these details are meant for the readers of these plays. Shaw was writing his plays as much for the readers as for the play-going public. The novels were very popular in England at the and of the 19th Century and the drama had to compete with them for the attention of the reading public. In a novel detailed descriptions of the setting and the characters can be given. The dramatists started writing detailed stage directions to provide the same thing to the readers of plays. The readers do not see the play on the stage. So they have to be given detailed descriptions of what would appear on the stage. In addition, they are also told in the Stage Directions many things about the history, nature and background of the characters which they usually find in novels.

Although these directions are meant for the stage, Shaw does not mention the stage at all. This is because he wants to give the readers the illusion of life. They should feel that the persons are talking in their drawing room and not in the drawing room made on the stage.

Shaw does not give the list of characters--'Dramatis Personae'—at the beginning. Nor does he name them as they appear. He starts naming them only after the name appears in

the dialogue. Thus Higgins is called only "The Note-Taker", till he introduces himself to Pickering. And Eliza is only "The Flower Girl" till she talks to the taximan. Shaw wants that the readers should regard them only as "The Note-Taker" and "The Flower Girl" till they are named in the dialogue.

Thus Shaw's Stage Directions play an imporant part in a play whether it is to be staged or to be read.

13

SHAW'S PROSE STYLE

Shaw said that he was not interested in style. He was a play-wright with a purpose. He wrote plays to reform society and to rid it of its evils. So the subject matter alone mattered with him. He was not interested in showing off the beauties of style.

It has been said that Shaw was like Socrates for his own contemporaries. He made them think. His plays made them think about love, sex, marriage, religion, war, evolution, wealth property, poverty, prostitution, exploitation of the poor by the rich, disease, language, democracy and various other problems of the modern world. He chose words which were most effective for conveying his ideas.

When Shaw said that he was not interested in style, what he meant was that he did not care to introduce beautiful phrases and high-sounding words. He chose words which best expressed his meaning. We can call this the style of the appropriate word. His style was the ideal instrument for saying what he wanted to say.

If we analyse Shaw's sentences now we find that his way was the most effective way in which his ideas could be expressed. If we try to substitute our words for Shaw's, the effectiveness of the idea is completely lost. We feel that the best way in which that idea can be expressed is the way in which Shaw has expressed it.

Shaw had the natural gift of expression. When he said something he had to be heard. Writing was in his blood. He wrote instinctively. Very truly he said, "I never felt inclined to write more than I felt inclined to breathe". It came naturally to him.

The most important quality of his writing was *clarity*. There was no ambiguity in anything that he wrote. He stuck to his resolve that he would not write anything "that should not be intelligible to a foreigner".

Shaw had a wonderful command over words. He was a brilliant talker and a witty writer. Even when the audience did not appreciate his ideas, they were thrilled by his words.

He was a master of epigram and paradox. When Mahatma Gandhi was murdered Shaw commented, "It is dengerous to be too good". In *Man and Superman* he makes the Devil prove with supreme wit that man is in love with death and not with life. He also proves that the seven cardinal virtues are the seven deadly sins.

It is said that style is the man. Shaw's style really represented him. It is devoid of colour and emotional outbursts. His dialogue is highly intellectural. Though he avoids poetry, his sentences have balance and rhythm. It is simple, direct and logical prose.

One critic has said that Shaw's Style is "Clear, hard and bright like varnished wood".

His manner of writing coincided with the matter that was to be conveyed. He can be argumentative where arguments are being advanced, eloquent where an appeal has to be made and even poetic where that is needed. For instance, the Devil's Speeches in *Man and Superman* are most eloquent and the Epilogue in *Saint Joan* is pure poetry.

There is one *defect* in the style of Shaw. That is the defect of the style of a teacher teaching a dull class. He has to repeat his ideas several times. Shaw wanted to drive home his point. So he is *repetitive*. He said each thing at least twice.

Shaw has had a profound impact on his audiences and his readers because his style suits his thoughts perfectly. It is the most perfect vehicle for his ideas.

14

THE PREFACES OF SHAW

Shaw wrote long prose essays called "Prefaces" for all the published volumes of his plays. Shaw was a playwright with a purpose and so he felt that he must explain to the readers his views on the problems posed in his plays. These could not be expressed in detail in the body of the play and so he expressed them in separate Prefaces. These look like pamphlets containing his ideas on thr various social, political, economic, relegious and biological problems of his day.

Very Important

Hesketh Pearson, his biographer, has told us that the Prefaces cost him more labour than the plays. Since they expressed his personal views he considered them more important. In fact, he felt that Shakespeare should have written a Preface to each play to explain his purpose in writing that play.

The prefaces were *not* meant to be introductions to the plays. In fact, he has told us that "most of them were written long after the plays to which they are attached, had been repeatedly performed".

Very Long

Most of the prefaces are very long. Some of them are even longer than the plays themselves. For example, *Androcles and the Lion* covers 48 pages in the Penguin edition and its Preface covers 98 pages. In order to keep up their interest Shaw divided them into Sections. In this Preface there are 83 sections. The sections were given catching titles which immediately arrest the attention of the reader. Two of the titles are: 'Why not give Christianity a trial?' and 'Was Jesus a coward?' These headings are bound to induce any curious reader to read them.

Style and Tone

The Prefaces are written in lucid prose. Since they were a part of Shaw's propaganda for his ideas, they are generally written in an emphatic style. He wants to hit hard at his opponents. The tone is that of a man who is perfectly convinced about what he is saying and who is certain that any reasonable man would be convinced by his arguments. The arguments are highly intellectual and very witty.

Shaw continued to write prefaces to his plays upto the end of his days. Age did not dull his wit nor did it stale the infinite variety of his ideas. Thev were as vigorous when he was 90 as they were when he was 30.

No Direct Connection

Fhere is no direct connection between most of the prefaces and the plays. They are certainly not commentaries on the plays. Generally, in the Preface he discusses various aspects of the problem which is presented in the play. Thus the Preface to Pygmalion is about Phonetics and the defects of the English alphabet and English Spellings, while the play deals with the consequences of training a poor girl to speak correct English and behave properly in polite society.

In some of the Prefaces he comments on issues raised by the plays. For example, the success of *Pygmalion*, a didactic play on a dry theme, gives him an opportunity to comment that all great art has to be didactic. The action of the British censor in banning the public performance of *Mrs. Warren's Profession* made him condemn the audacity of the censor to pass judgement on his plays. He wants people to bring their conscience and their brains to the theatre when they come to see the performance of his plays.

But normally, "his prefaces were essays independent of the plays, written when their subject was too large to be fully dealt with on the stage ; and it was nonsense to think that they were meant for play-goers to read before the plays could be understood." However, a person would enjoy the play better if he reads the preface before seeing the play on the stage. If a person has no idea of Biology, he would do well to read the preface to *Back to Methuselah* before reading the play. If a person has never heard of Joan of Arc, he would do well to read the Preface before seeing *Saint Joan*.

Forms of Prefaces

The prefaces take various forms. Usually they are in the form of an essay. But the preface to *Man and Superman* is in the form of a letter to a former friend. In the Preface to *On the Rocks* there is a play within the preface. When he has to discuss a serious subject like creative evolution in the Preface to *Back to Methuselah*, he begins by describing some experience of his own in a lighter vein. He once found a man asking for the works of the famous naturalist, Buffon, but the man pronounced it as buffoon. Shaw describes this and turns the joke at his own cost.

"One day early in the eighteen hundred and sixties, I, being then a small boy, was with my nurse, buying something when there entered an elderly man, weighty and solemn, who advanced to the counter and said prompously, "Have you the Works of the celebrated Buffoon ?"

"My own works were at that time unwritten, or it is possible that the shop assistant might have misunderstood me so far as to produce a copy of *Man and Superman*."

His Purpose

Whatever might be the approach, the purpose of Shaw was always to propagate his ideas through the prefaces. His ideas about marriage and prostitution, war and love, capitalism and socialism, kingship and democracy, medicine and vivisection, religious persecution and creative evolution—in short his views on all the problems which were current in the first half of the twentieth century are discussed in the various prefaces.

Will They Last ?

Many of the problems discussed in the prefaces have already become out of date. New ideas have taken the place of those held by Shaw, and after sometime Shaw's discussions will have only a historical interest. But the plays will last. Thus the Preface to *The Doctor's Dilemma* where the medical profession is discussed, has already become out of date in England which is now a welfare state. But *The Doctor's Dilemma* will continue to be staged and enjoyed chiefly because of the lively portraits of the doctors.

15

BERNARD SHAW AS A DRAMATIST—A GENERAL ASSESSMENT

George Bernard Shaw was the most representative British dramatist of the period from 1890 to 1920. He was the father or the new Drama of Ideas and his plays made a great impact on the theatre-going as well as the reading public. Whether people agreed with him or not, they could not ignore him. This 'bright, nimble, fierce and comprehending being', as Churchill called him, gave new life and vigour to British Drama which had almost gone to sleep for over a hundred years.

His Mission

It has been said that Shaw was the Socrates of the present age ; he made people think about their problems. He was a socialist thinker and a social reformer and he took pen in hand only to make people conscious of their part in the evils of society. He said, "I write with the deliberate object of converting the nation to my opinions—I have no other incentive to write plays". His was "the drama of the thinking man". He was 'an intellectual irritant', who did not let people think that everything was all right with their society, their morals and their manners. People, he felt, had gone frightfully wrong in the relations between the sexes and in the distribution of wealth and his mission was to put mankind on the right path, so that man could evolve into the superman.

Drama of Ideas

Taking his cue from Ibsen, he popularised the drama of ideas in England. In place of the old drama of sentiments he introduced the drama of debates and discussions. In his plays he presented various aspects of the problems of society from flesh-eating and war to medicine and marriage, from capitalism

and prostitution to love and the creation of the superman. He wrote plays only because he felt that through this medium he could convey his ideas better. As Dr. Sahai has said, "he did not believe in art for art's sake but in *art for artist's sake.* Every play of his bears the stamp of the personality and the views of the playwright."

His ideas were unconventional. He saw things differently from others and he claimed that he saw them in the correct perspective. In his "*Widowers' Houses*" he made his audience and his readers realize that they were as much responsible for the woes of the slum dwellers as the slum landloard himself. In *Mrs. Warren's Profession* he shows that it is the exploitation of women by the capitalists that provides recruits to brothels. Medicine for him is only a branch of witchcraft. He separates sex from sentiment and says that it is a noble instinct because it is the agency of the Life Force for the creation of the Superman. He draws our attention to the bondage of women in married life. He shows that most of the soldiers are fools and cowards and the qualities required in Officers are those of a businessman. He reverses the romantic roles of men and women and proves that woman is the hunter and man her quarry. He refuses to differentiate between justice and crime, between marriage and prostitution and between a financier and a burglar.

Anti-Sentimentalist

Shaw felt that most of our evils are caused by the clouding of our vision by false sentiments. Thus the reality of war is that it is nothing but murder and loot indulged in by cowards. But sentimentalists have given it a false glory by associating chivalry, bravery, honour and patriotism with war. Similarly "higher love" which is based on social convention and family prestige and not on the instincts of the individuals, if false.

Shaw denounces the intellect also and believes in the supremacy of instincts. His supermen like Napoleon, Caesar, Bluntschli and Joan are guided by their instincts. But that does not mean that they act in a whimsical manner. Unconsciously their conduct is regulated by their intellect. Sentiments do not touch them at all.

Socialist with a Difference

Shaw was a socialist, but he did not write sentimentally about poverty. He was not moved to pity the poor. His view

was that poverty is a great evil. In fact it is the root of all evils. It can be rooted out not by pitying the poor but by changing the entire economic fabric of our society. He did not depict scenes of dire poverty in his plays. Nor did he make poor people the main characters of his plays. He chose characters and situations from upper class life and showed that their actions are responsible for the poverty and misery of their fellowmen.

Constructive Thinker

Shaw was a constructive thinker. He believed that Nature and human instinct want man to evolve into the superman. The Life Force is a dynamic impulse in man and specially in woman which seeks to raise mankind to higher levels of existence. But he believed that the Life Force cannot do its work properly because of poverty, inequality and sentimental marriages, Hence he began by condemning these evils which are inpediments in the way of creative evolution.

But man has become so depraved and corrupt that even education and socialism cannot set him right. The only hope is that man should evolve into the superman.

Will The Plays Last ?

One objection to problem plays is that they appear to be very interesting so long as that problem is agitating the minds of the people. But if the problem ceases to exist the play will also lose its interest. This is a valid objection to the serious problem plays of Galsworthy and others. But it does not apply to the plays of Shaw.

For instance, the problems presented in *the Doctor's Dilemma* have ceased to exist in England. England is now a welfare state. Diseases are not only cured but prevented there now. Patients are no longer at the mercy of the specialists. The poor private practioner no longer exploits the poor patients. Doctors cannot use their whims in diagnosing and curing diseases. And hospitals no longer refuse to admit patients on the ground of their personal immorality. And yet *The Doctor's Dilemma* is acted and read in England with great interest even now. The reason is that the characterization of the doctors is superb. Ridgeon and Walpole and B.B., with all their whims, appear to be living beings and so keep up the interest of the play.

The second reason for keeping Shaw's. plays alive is their wit and humour. For instance, the following statement of B. B.

is absurd but it will amuse audiences for ever. "Walpole has no intellect. A mere surgeon. Wonerful operator ; but after all, what is operating ? only manual labour."

Doctors are no longer permitted to invent diseases on the basis of experiments on three dogs and one monkey. But this is just what Dr. Paramore (in *The Philanderer*) had done. And yet we cannot help rolling with laughter when we find him crying out in agony when he hears that the disease does not exist "The wrost of news ! Terrible news ! Fatal news ! My disease—the work of my life !......It was all a mistake, there was no such disease".

Shaw's plays are full of wit and humour, and so they will continue to interest audiences for ever. Englishmen even enjoy the parts of the play where they are abused. For instance, they roar with laughter when they hear Caesar saying (in *Caesar and Cleoapatra*) about Britannus :

> "Pardon him, Theodotus ! he is a barbarian and thinks that the customs of his tribe and island are the laws of nature".

The same thing happens when they bear Britannus saying to Caesar who is swimming away from the lighthouse : "Caesar ! I am a man and a Briton, not a fish. I must have a boat. I cannot swim".

Horses are no longer used in warfare. But can the following wit ever become stale ?

> *Sergius* : Well said, Switzer, Shall I lend you my best horse ?
>
> *Bluntschli* : No, damn your horse ! I thank you all the same, my dear fellow.........I shall fight you on foot. Horseback's too dangerous : I don't want to kill you if I can help it.

Prefaces

Shaw wrote long prefaces to explain the purpose of his plays. These are lucid expositions of current problems. Their subject matter may become out-of-date but due to the style of their prose they have timeless merit.

Sui Generis

When Shaw was asked about the nature of his plays, he called them "sui generis"—unique of their own kind. They are

indeed unique and cannot be classified according to the old categories like Tragedy, Comedy, Farce etc. There are serious discussions in his comedies and light-hearted wit in the midst of tragic situations. In a moment he can take us from the sublime to the ridiculous. In *Man and Superman* Tanner, who has revolutionary views, eloquently defends Violet's action in becoming pregnant without entering wedlock. But he collapses the next moment when it is discovered that she is already married and her child is a legitimate one. The climax of comedy is thus turned in a moment into an anti-climax of farce.

Shaw combined in himself the qualities of a tragedian and a comedian, a jester and a prophet.

Conclusion

A. C. Ward is, therefore, right in saying that Shaw stands second only to Shakespeare among all the British playwrights.

16

SHAW'S VIEWS ON HIS OWN ART

His Aim

"I write plays with the deliberate object of converting the nation to my opinions.........I have no other incentive to write plays."

His Themes

"I can no longer be satisfied with fictitious morals and fictitious good conduct, shedding fictitious glory on robbery, starvation, disease, crime, drink, war, cruelty, cupidity, and all the other commonplaces of civilization which drive men to the theatre and to make foolish pretences that such things are progress, science, morals, religion, patriotism, imperial supremacy, national greatness and all the other names the news-papers call them. To me the tragedy and comedy of life lie in the consequences, sometimes terrible, sometimes ludicrous, of our persistent attempts to found our institutions on the ideals suggested to our imagination by our half satisfied passions instead of on a genuinely scientific natural history."

The Nature of his Plays

"My plays are mixtures of seventeenth century rhetoric, of modern thought and of that barbarous English humour which shockd Voltaire in Shakespeare. They are full of politics, religion, biology and all sorts of terrestrial things except adultery. They contain no villains, no duels, no misunderstandings, nor dramatic plots ; and when the question of passion between the two sexes arises, it is the real thing, not the convention which holds its stead on your modest boulevards. The material which serves your telented dramatic authors for the construction of a whole play would not last me thirty seconds ; the old fashioned denouements are mere phrases in my plays, at half a dozen a page."

Destructive and Creative Work

"I am by profession what is called an original thinker, my business being to question and test all the established creeds and codes to see how far they are still valid, and how far worn out and superseded, and even to draft new creeds and codes. To classify, summarize, existent systems of thought—theories, philosophies, religions—is critical, not original ; to set up new creeds is original. The former is destructive, the latter constructive. I am a first rate weed-killer ; I not only appropriate all the new ideas of other people, but see what their acceptance involves......This sort of work, if thoroughly done, leads to new lights and is almost automatically creative."

Discussion

"Formerly, you had in what was called a well-made play an exposition in the first act, a situation in the second, an unravelling in the third. Now you have exposition, situation, and discussion ; and the discussion is the test of the play-wright......... The discussion conquered Europe in Ibsen's *Doll's House* ; and now the serious play-wright recognizes in the discussion not only the main test of his highest powers, but also the real centre of his play's interest."

Not just Economic Treatises

"My plays are no more economic treatises than Shakespeare's. All my plays were written as plays of life, character and human destiny like those of Shakespeare and Euripides".

× × × ×

"My stock-in-trade is that of Scheherazade and Chaucer no less than that of Aristophanes and Shakespeare."

× × × ×

His Objection to Shakespeare

"The characters of Shakespeare are not heroes, for not one among them tries to see things and judge life for himself. Shakespeare's men and women are good or bad persons but none of them is an original thinker."

× × × ×

Othello as a Problem Play

"*Othello* would be a prodigiously better play if it were a serious discussion of the highly interesting problem of how a

simple Moorish soldier would get on with a "super-subtle" Venetian lady of fashion if he married her."

Economic Studies

"In all my plays my economic studies have played an important part as a knowledge of Anatomy does in the works of Michael Angelo."

× × × ×

Shaw described himself as a specialist in heretical and immoral plays.

× × × ×

"My mind's eye, like my body's, was normal; it saw things differently from other people's eyes and saw them better."

× × × ×

His Variety

Shaw said that two events of considerable importance happened in the middle of the nineteenth century; one was that he was born and the other was that Tennyson wrote his famous line: "God fulfils Himself in many ways."

His Plots

"Shavian plots are as silly as Shakesperean plots and, like Shakespeare's they are all stolen from other writers."

× × × ×

"I avoid plots like the plague......My procedure is to imagine characters and let them rip......"

Intellect a Passion

"What you will find in my plays is the belief that intellect is essentially a passion, and that the search for enlightenment of any sort is far more interesting and enduring than, say, the sexual pursuit of a woman by a man, which was the only interest the play of my early days regarded as proper in the theatre."

Inspiration

"I am not governed by principles; I am inspired; how or why I cannot explain, because I do not know. But inspiration it must be; for it comes to me without any reference to my own ends or interests".

"I find myself possessed of a theme in the following manner. I am pushed by a natural need to set to work, to write down

conversations that came into my head unaccountably. At first I hardly know the speakers, and cannot find names for them. Then they become more and more familiar, and I learn their names. Finally, I come to know them very well, and discover what it is they are driving at and who they have said an done the things I have been moved to set down.

"This is not being guided by principles ; it is hallucination ; and sane hallucination is what we call play or drama."

His Characterization

"My practice is to make my characters say not what in real life they could never bring themselves to say, even if they understood themselves clearly enough, but the naked soul truth, quite objectively and scientifically presented, thus combining the extreme of unnaturalness with the deepest attainable naturalness."

Characters only from the Leisured Classes

"Shakespeare's characters are mostly members of the leisured class......The same thing is true of my plays. Industrial slavery is not compatible with the freedom of adventure, that personal refinement and intellectual culture, that scope of action, which the higher and subtler drama demands......When poverty is abolished and leisure and grace of life become general, the only plays surviving from our epoch which will have any relation to life as it will be lived then will be those in which none of the persons represented are troubled with want of money or wretched drudgery."

His Humour

"It is by jingling the bell of the jester that I, like Heine, have made people listen to me. All genuinely intellectual work is humorous."

× × × ×

The Clown in Him

"I have got the tragedian and I have got the clown in me and the clown trips me up in the most dreadful way."

Style

"I have never aimed at style in my life ; style is a sort of melody that comes into my sentences by itself.........But I did

set up one condition in my early days. I resolved that I would write nothing that should not be intelligible to a foreigner."

Art Should be Didactic

"I wish to boast that *Pygmalion* has been an extremely successful play, both on stage and screen, all over Europe and North America as well as at home. It is so intensely and deliberately didactic, and its subject is esteemed so dry that I delight in throwing it at the heads of wiseacres who repeat the parrot cry that art should never be didactic. It goes to prove my contention that great art can never be anything else."

× × × ×

Art for Art's Sake

"For art's sake alone I would not face the toil of writing a single line."

How Pygmalion Began

"Plays begin in all sorts of ways. I can sit down without an idea in my head except that I must write a play, and a play comes. Most plays begin with a dramatic situation ; the rest is only a device for bringing it about.

"As to *Pygmalion*, the scene in which Eliza makes her successful debut at the Ambassador's party was the root of the play at its inception. But when I got to work I left it to the imagination of the audience, as the theatre could not afford its expense and it made the play too long.

"Sir James Barrie spotted this at once and remonstrated. So when the play was screened, I added the omitted scene, as the Cinema can afford practically unlimited money, and the absence of intervals left plenty of time to spare."

17
OPINIONS OF GREAT CRITICS

Penetrating Vision of the Writer

"In all this intellectual treatment of literature, of history, and of social life, the prime thing we note is the penetrating vision of the writer. There is no stopping for him half-way; he is brave enough to carry his sight as far as it will reach. The unkown terrors bring no fear to him; he is calm and restrained in the consciousness of his own intellectual eminence. It is not too much to say that intellectually he bestrides our modern thought like a colossus. Filled with a deep horror of misery, imbued with a sense of the unhealthiness of abject poverty, mental and physical, of the slums, he does not find solace in a weak humanitarianism or an equally weak sentimental philanthropy. He pierces down below the surface and sees that a Trench and a Major Barbara are of no avail and that even these must bow to take sustenance from the things they despise. The great constructive element in his work is not his philosophy of age, expressed in Back to Methuselah, but this inimitable power of searching to the very roots of things for the causes of decay and disintegration—whereas others would be content to nip off the withered but or to give a spray of disinfectant, Mr. Shaw desires to transplant and give a change of soil."

—*A. Nicoll.*

Prefaces

"He wrote elaborate prefaces through which he trained the owls who lacked his normal vision to get used to daylight. He had embarked on the mission of castigating the world into right thinking with the whip of satire; of collaring little romance-fed minds and forcibly feeding them on a hygienic diet."

× × × ×

Drama of Ideas

"Shaw was the father of the theatre of ideas in England, seriously preaching his sermons on social follies and social

vices, yet no one gave more to the drama of his time in the way of wit, fun and humour."

—*A. C. Ward.*

Prose Artist

"From words alone he weaves an irresistible spell—The drama of ideas was his medium but it was as a virtuoso prose artist with the power to make words act precisely as he intended that he succeeded in turning an austere medium into a beguiling instrument."

—*A. C. Ward.*

Shaw and Darwin

"Shaw's gospel of Creative Evolution and his belief in the Life Force were opposed to Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection. In Darwin's theory the survival of the fittest comes about through the killing off of the weak by the strong, but Shaw's idea is that the fittest are those who survive by superior intelligence and by the exercise of will power. Shaw held that if we desire with passionate strength of will to be better and finer people and to live longer, in fact to be changed into Supermen and if that strength of will is passed on to our descendants, what we desire will be brought about. The nations would be ruled in wisdom and virtue and war and all other evils will banish from the earth."

—*A. C. Ward.*

Communist View

"Shaw's bourgeois individualism is a reason why his plays are full of deliberately forced conversions, unconvincing denouements and a general escape from reality through fantasy and humour."

—*Caudwell.*

Defects

"Shaw laid too much emphasis on the merely physical relationship between men and women, assigning an inferior position to women......He had no conception of religion by which I mean the communion of the soul with some righteousness felt to be outside and above itself".

—*Beatrice Webb.*

His achievement

"All told, Shaw is one of the greatest playwrights of the world. He has enriched the theatre by a long succession of plays

whose positive quality (apart from their abounding and irrepressible wit) lies in the passion of moral, political and social indignation with which they are infused. He has stripped militarism of its glamour, history of its pomp, sex of its romance, science of its magic, and religion of its sorcery. Yet he seeks to create as well as to destroy. Without a trace of respect of aesthetic standards—which are indeed included in his formidable list of common heresies—he has contrived to stimulate the thought and quicken the perception of multitudes, and to present his own lucid philosophy in a form that fits the necessity of the stage."

—*Beatrice Webb.*

The Superman's Function not Clear

"When poverty has been abolished, social morality has been founded on equality and there has been a current orientation of sexual morality, what sort of life will the Superman live ?"

—*Caudwell.*

Fails to see the Reality of Sentiments

"The great limitation of Shaw is that he does not understand the depth and seriousness of human emotions. He is a preacher of "intelligent socialism", not of "emotional socialism", the world of sentiments being a sealed book to him. Being a scientific biologist, he understands instincts, but has rejected most of our sentiments as unreal. He is interested in the evolution of the race and does not care for the happiness of the individual ; he is opposed to sexual indulgence being regarded as a mere pleasure but recognizes it as an experience. His revolt against marriage is a 'revolt against its sentimentality, its romance, its amorism, even against its enervating happiness". The realist has failed to see that sentiments may be unintelligent and yet genuine. It is the defect of an intelligent thinker that he forgets that there is so much in life which is false from a scientific point of view, but undeniably real from a human point of view.

"Bernard Shaw thinks that what is unessential to the evolution of life is also false and, therefore, he rejects much that is sincere, genuine and real. —*A. C. Ward.*

Influence of Bunyan on Shaw

"Shaw generalized the Bunyan technique, incorporating ideologies, rather than single traits, in dramatic characters. The

drama arises less from a conflict of wills than from a clash of beliefs. Spiritually Shaw and Bunyan are closely akin; in Puritanism, scorn of respectability, the setting of religion above church, understanding of the profound seriousness of existence, and overt recognition, from book, platform, play, or conventicle, that life, imaginatively conceived, is a mighty struggle from the cradle to the grave, to win out through trial, tribulation and danger—an unresting pilgrimage, ever onward and upward, with the last ascent to some celestial city of light."

—*Archibald Henderson.*

A Dramatic Psycho-Analyst

"His object in writing plays is to teach some salutary lesson through tensions between characters whose souls utter the language of uninhibited truth. These characters are lulled by Dr. Shaw into a Trusting stage of utter honesty, and in a social confessional summon from the vast deeps of the sub-conscious blithe spirits to disclose the truths in expression transcending the conventional limits of human association, save the restrictions of decency and good taste."

—*Archibald Henderson.*

Demolition and Creation

"Naturally endowed with wit, humour, clarity of thought and lucidity of expression, he developed these gifts by indefatigable study and practice until he became a master of epigram, paradox, invective, humorous exaggeration, and anti-climax. He became the supreme apple-cart upsetter, fraud-detective cantexposer, and ego-collapser of his time.

"That was the negative side of his crusade—sane destructiveness.

"His creative work began after the Shavian wrecking outfit had completed the work of demolition. It was then that the real Shaw, the poet, the maker, showed himself in his true colours."

—*Archibald Henderson.*

Defects of his Philosophy

"Shaw claims that he has evolved a new philosophy and life to mankind a new religon with a Bible thrown in for good measure. This Bible embodies Shaw's philosophy of the Life Force,

or simply his philosophy of life. He never succeeded in organising this philosophy in a coherent and consistent whole. It is a cold, arid, unattractive world in which the sublimative principles of love, romance and idealism are replaced by reflection and contemplation. It is the religion for a universe of extinct plants and a bloodless race of octogenarians with "calm of mind, all passion spent". At the conclusion of this 'metabiological pentateuch' Lilith, representing the principle of life, speaks Shaw's message, "It is enough that there is a beyond". Chesterton truthfully parried, "It is no enough."

—*Archibald Henderson.*

1
THE PREFACE

In the Preface to *The Doctor's Dilemma* Shaw explains way he is dissatisfied with the medical profession. He is not against doctors. They do a tremendous amount of work to give relief to suffering humanity. But at present the state does not provide free medical service to the public. The doctors are mostly poor and they earn their living by private medical practice. They are paid only if people fall ill. They are, therefore, interested in people falling ill and remaining ill. They perform operations which are not necessary but which are performed because they fill the pocket of the surgeon. They prolong the diseases of their patients. They earn cheap money by giving inoculations and vaccinations.

Shaw feels that the fault for all these evils is not that of doctors but of the public. The remedy lies in socialising the medical profession. The doctors should all be in the service of the state and they should be paid a decent wage. Their duty would be to care for the health of the the public. They should prevent diseases where possible and cure where necessary.

Shaw's ideas about vaccination and vivisection are unacceptable. But his other suggestions have been implemented with the formation of the Public Health Service in Great Britain which looks after the health of all the citizens.

SUMMARY OF THE PREFACE

At present the medical service provided to society is absurd. But it is not the fault of doctors. The doctors are paid if they perform an operation. If they decide that an operation is not necessary they are deprived of the payment. So a poor surgeon

will always decide to cut a leg or an arm of a rich patient or to remove his tonsil or his appendix.

The medical profession is called a noble profession but it does not have a high character. The tragedy of illness is that you are delivered helplessly in the hands of doctors who prolong your illness in order to make money.

The doctors who are doing research work on diseases and medicines, are very cruel to animals on whom they are experimenting.

We first make a doctor a judge to decide whether the operation is necessary and then reward with a few hundred guineas if he decides against us (i.e. to perform an operation to remove an organ.)

Only those doctors are honest whose cured patients are immediately replaced by fresh ones.

If a doctor performs a serious operation on an important person he becomes well known.

But when a person falls ill he has to call a doctor. Moliere and Napoleon knew the truth about doctors; but when they fell ill, they had to call them.

Sometimes the doctor kills the patient by his wrong medicines but we have the satisfaction that the doctor did his best. If someone's child is ill and he does not call the doctor the father can be prosecuted for manslaughter, although the disease was such that the child would have died in spite of medical care.

The doctors are not infallible and so if a patient dies in spite of the doctor's treatment, the doctor should not be accused of malice or corrupt practice.

The treatment prescribed by different doctors is different. Some prescribe medicines which others prohibit.

Even if some doctor acts maliciously it cannot be proved against him because the only evidence which a court will accept is expert evidence; and no expert doctor will ever give evidence against another doctor.

Privately the doctors talk about each other's blunders but they do not say so openly because that would expose all of them. The doctors are in a conspiracy to hide their shortcomings.

Everything is on the side of the doctor. When people die of diseases they are said to die from natural causes. When they

recover, the doctor gets the credit for curing them. All operations are said to be successful if the patient goes out of the hospital alive. But the subsequent complications are ignored. There is a fashion among some people to get themselves operated upon. Once an operation has been performed it is impossible to prove afterwards that the operation was unnecessary. It is said that Chloroform has made surgery painless, but the patient suffers a lot after the effect of the anaesthesia is gone. But by that time the surgeon has already walked away with his fee.

The private practitioners are generally poor and their patients are very poor. So they cannot prescribe medicines which are very costly but they prescribe some sham treatment and ask the patient to come again. That is how they earn their living. Most of the poor patients need nourishment and not medicine.

The doctors who have "the ideal rich" patients are interested in keeping them perpetually ill because that ensures a regular income to them. Their nursing homes are run like expensive hotels. He has to keep working all the time, because if he falls ill or goes away somewhere his income stops. So he wants to earn as much as possible while his health lasts.

Those who do crimes on a large scale are proud of their actions. It is only small wrong-doers who have a prick of the conscience. In *The Doctor's Dilemma* Louis Dubedat is so much satisfied with his conscience as an artist that he is utterly selfish and unscrupulous in every other relationship. We should be honourable in one thing only. In all other things we might cheat and deceive others. There are many persons who are strong, skilful and energetic in their work but there are selfish and tyrannical at home. A good artist sometimes sacrifices his family for the sake of his art. He may have vices but they are tolerated because he benefits society immensely. But a surgeon does not benefit society in any way. People go to him only to be tormented and maimed.

The doctors now believe that all diseases are caused by bacteria. Their formula for curing diseases is : "Find the microbe and kill it". The microbe is easily killed by sun and wind. But the doctors ask the patients to collect the bacteria in kerchiefs and then send them to the laundry. This causes epidemics.

The doctors believe that all microbes were born in the Garden of Eden; and they have been causing all diseases ever since. But if this were true, plague alone would have destroyed the whole of

mankind. Epidemics appear and disappear mysteriously. But the cheap doctors who examine the samples of blood etc. always declare that they have found microbes in them. The microbe theory is only a superstition of doctors.

Vaccination.

Shaw had heard doctors affirm and deny the same thing. Some doctors regard a certain medicine as a panacea for all diseases, while others regard it as the cause of cancer and lunacy. They purchase some cheap stuff from somewhere and inject it under the patient's skin. The patient is charged half a crown for it. So all doctors are in favour of inoculation. The patient is happy if it causes some illness. Sometimes inoculation causes dangerous diseases. Dirt and other germs get into the system and cause havoc.

The vaccines are introduced into the body of the patient without finding out his condition. Sir Almroth has shown that before inoculation the patient's "opsonic index" must be determined. If the inoculation is given at a wrong time, the patient may get the disease in a virulent form. But other doctors denounce this as a fad because they do not want to undertake the trouble and expense of this test. Shaw suggests that inoculation by private practioners should be punished as an offence.

The doctors have no common sense. They advise a poor man to take champagne and go to Egypt in winter.

All doctors practise vaccination because it brings them money from all persons—diseased or healthy. Sometimes there is an epidemic and in a panic people want to get themselves vaccinated again. This is a windfall for the doctors. Vaccination is ferociously defended by doctors because it brings a good income to all of them.

Hahnemann showed that a medicine is more effective if taken in very small quantities. So he was opposed by doctors and chemists who become rich by selling large quantities of medicines.

The medical profession is like a trade union. Their aim is not to promote science or improve the health of the nation. They are out to bring more money to the private doctor. Just as labourers resist the introduction of labour-saving machines, in the same way doctors resist every advance of science which threatens their income. Thus doctors are antiscience. They

even oppose better hygiene because it will reduce diseases and so reduce their incomes.

The only solution is that the private medical practitioners should be absorbed in the public health service of the nation.

Vivisection.

Doctors have a reputation for kindness and humanity. One is, therefore, surprised that they kill living animals and dissect them or practise the worst cruelties on them in order to advance their knowledge. In doing so they break all the restraints of law, honour and pity. In doing this they have no economic or sentimental motive. It is crude rascality. There cannot be any civilized motive in it. Not one doctor in a thousand is a vivisector. The doctors would, therefore, win the esteem of the public if they condemn vivisection.

The primitive idea was that a person who does dreadful things can also do wonderful things. The tribal chiefs used to keep their subordinates terrified. Today the wickedness of our medicine men is rooted not in science but in superstitition. Vivisection pays the doctor because it appeals to the fear and credulity of the savage in us.

Those who support vivisection say that the motive of the vivisector is curiosity which is divine. They claim that the right to knowledge is a fundamental human right which justifies all the cruelty which is practised on animals. A person is not allowed to put his mother into a fire only because he wants knowledge of how long an adult woman would survive at 500° F. But if he wants to torture a dog in order to get knowledge, society does not object, although the dog is our fellow-creature. Shaw may honestly feel that the only way to improve the sanitation of London is to burn it but nobody would allow this to be done. We now-a-days detect a stone in the kidney of a person without cutting open his abdomen. Rontgen rays do not hurt anyone. So in the modern age no one can say that there is no other key to knowledge except cruelty. The only knowledge we get from cruelty is the knowledge of cruelty itself.

Even those who are against vivisection practise cruelty for its own sake in their daily lives. People kill animals for sport. Ladies wear dresses which are made after ruthless massacres of countless animals. We want the butchers to supply us with veal. The butchers have, therefore, to kill the calves in a most

cruel manner by making them bleed to death. The ducks are killed in a most cruel manner. The young men are treated with great cruelty at the public schools.

The British are a cruel nation, and they should not pretend to be more humane than vivisectors. Cruelty is practised under cover of sport, fashion, education, and discipline. So the vivisector practises cruelty for pleasure and profit under the clock of science.

In man there is a specific lust for cruelty. People enjoy seeing executions, floggings and other exhibitions of suffering.

The vivisectors say that they are kind-hearted persons who inflict suffering only to relieve suffering later on. They are only moved by sympathy for disease-ridden humanity. But this is not a valid argument. This is like the case of the Italian who tortured mice only to find out the effects of pain. Another gentleman starved sixty dogs to death to see how they became weaker and finally died. This knowledge anybody could have given to him.

We should observe the behaviour of a person who has conducted mathematical research and compare it with that of a person doing vivisection. Then we shall see that there is nothing scientific in vivisection.

A Routine.

Vivisection has now become a routine. A butcher may be a kind hearted man but he kills animals everyday. When a cruel thing becomes customary even a kind-hearted person becomes indifferent to the suffering of others. Persons who are not cruel sometimes beat their children mercilessly. Even good schoolmasters beat the children and inflict pain on their students.

People do many wrong things because they are customary. A respectable man will lie everyday about the qualities of his manufactures.

Vivisection is a routine in the preparation of lectures in medical colleges. They feel no more for the frog or the rabbit than we feel when we are cutting paper.

The vivisectors do not get any pleasure out of it. In Galsworthy's play, *Justice*, the torture of solitary confinement is inflicted on a person without there being a single cruel person in the drama.

People cannot speak the truth about the medical profession because when death threatens the household they are helplessly dependent on the doctors. But it is not necessary for doctors to be cruel.

The Christian Church is stupid in saying that animals have no souls and so no sin is committed if we do a crime against an animal. But we sin against our own soul if we are cruel to those whom St Francis called "his little brothers."

If doctors are allowed to practise cruelty on animals for their experiments, the next step will be that they will try these experiments on human beings. Doctors find it cheaper to try their experiment on poor patients in hospitals. This experiment is more instructive than the one performed on animals.

Doctors deny that they experiment on poor patients but that is a lie.

Doctors justify all their cruel experiments on the ground that they are advancing knowledge. A disaster like an earthquake or a big fire or the wrecking of a ship, all add to our knowledge. But would anyone be permitted to produce an artificial earthquake for the advancement of knowledge? The path to knowledge must not be through darkness and cruelty.

We are so afraid to die that we permit doctors to perpetrate all types of cruelties if they say that they are trying to save human life.

It was the general public and not doctors who popularised vaccination.

Jenner was in favour of making the vaccine from a horse. But we like the cow, and so we get our vaccine from the cow.

Everybody did not get smallpox before vaccination was thought of. Nor did all persons bitten by dogs die of hydrophobia before Louis Pasteur. Even now two to three percent of the persons bitten by mad dogs die in spite of inoculation. The percentage before inoculation could not have been higher.

Statistics can be made to prove anything. Thus if we take two persons. One is vaccinated and the other is not. If the one who is not vaccinated dies, we can say that hundred percent of those who were vaccinated were saved and all those who were not vaccinated perished.

It can also be proved statistically that persons who have a university degree or wear gold watches are more immune to

disease than those who do not have these privileges. Actually the immunity is given by better food and better hygienic conditions which these people can afford and poor people cannot.

Where vaccination is compulsorily enforced by the state, its efficacy can be easily proved because only vagrants can escape it, and vagrants are naturally more prone to catch diseases than the regular householders.

Greater Attention

Now-a-days there is a scare of infection which is misplaced but there is greater attention to hygiene and cleanliness. This has resulted in a victory over disease.

The way to popularise an operation or a remedy is to identify the worst disease known at the time and say that that operation or that remedy will cure that disease. Thus if the doctors were to say that if a person's little finger is cut in childhood, he will never get cancer, there will be a rush to get the little finger cut.

A doctor, in order to be successful, has to follow the whims of his patients. For instance, if a doctor had told a patient in the 19th century England that he should sleep in his room in an open camp bed with his window open he would have lost his patient. The doctor cannot change the daily habits of his patients. If the doctor goes ahead of the superstitions of his patients he is ruined. The fashions in hygiene have all come from the laity and not from doctors. If the doctors do not agree with the latest fashions, they are regarded as "old-fashioned" and have to make way for younger doctors. In short, private medical practice is governed, not by science, but by supply and demand.

But the doctors create the fashions of the year in operations and treatments. These are advertised in such a way that a sort of epidemic is formed and patients are induced to take treatments and undergo operations they do not want.

The Doctor's Hardships

As men doctors are no worse than other men. Generally their motives in choosing the career of a healer are clearly generous. That is why in *The Doctor's Dilemma* Shaw made the artist a rascal and the doctors angels. The defects of the doctor's position arise because of his poverty and dependence. A baker does not feed a hungry man unless he can pay. But if a doctor allows a poor man to perish without aid, he is regarded as a

monster. The private medical practitioner makes out his bills considering the paying capacity of his patients.

A doctor is, due to the nature of his work, an emergency man. He has to disregard his health and comfort. When there is somebody seriously ill in the house we regard the doctor as a saviour and so give him trouble at all hours. We call him even when he is hungry or weary or sleepy. He gets no compensation for working at night. He runs the risk of infection all the time. He is poorly paid and has to work all 24 hours. Added to all this is the agony of treating poor patients who need not medicine but money.

The Public Doctor

We have in the Medical Officer of Health a doctor who is free from the worst hardships and so from the worst vices of the private medical practitioner. Whereas the income of the medical practitioner depends on the prevalence of disease, the income and credit of the Medical Officer depends on the health of the people. Small municipalities, of course, do not pay the Medical Officer well and he has to supplement his income by private practice. The remedy is for a number of municipalities to join together and appoint a really competent person at a high salary.

Medical Organization

In private practice the time of expert doctors is wasted on cases of very simple diseases. In other professions there are different persons performing different parts of a piece of work. But a private doctor or surgeon has to do everything himself. First class men have to do third class work for money. There is no division of labour. The service should be organised in such a way that the expert looks after only serious cases while the ordinary cases are looked after by the other doctors. Where the ordinary doctor finds himself unable to cope with a serious case he should immediately call the expert consultant. In the hands of private practitioners the medical profession is a conspiracy to exploit popular credulity and human suffering. The doctors should be paid by the country to maintain the nation in good health. A medical officer should be rewarded if the number of patients in his district is reduced.

We should take the private practitioners into the Public Health Service. Thus the adventurers—in Private Illness Service—should be brought into the Public Health Service. They will do

good to the public and will have no anxiety regarding their income.

All public health measures including vaccination should be the responsibility of the Public Health Officer.

Earlier religions had bathing ceremonies. The missionaries condemend them and so when the people become converted to Christianity they became dirty. The Christians should be told that the places where they keep pictures of Jesus and Virgin Mary should be kept very clean.

We should not stick to things as they are but should accept new ideas and work on the method of trial and error.

Shaw says that the Opsonin theory of Dr. Ridgeon in *The Doctor's Dilemma* is based on the researches of Sir Almroth Wright. He discovered that the white corpuscles or phagocytes which attack and devour disease germs for us do their work only when we butter the disease germs appetisingly for them with a natural sauce which Sir Almroth called Opsonin and our production of this condiment rises and falls rhythmically. If we inoculate a patient with germs at a time when his powers of cooking them for consumption by the Phagocytes is low the disease germs will conquer him and may even kill him. If the inoculation is done at a time when the cooking power is at a climax, the phagocytes will be able to eat up the disease germs and the patient will recover. He invented a method of finding out in which phase a patient is at a particular time. But the general practitioners refused to learn this new technique and carried on inoculations in the blundering way of Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonington. Sometimes it works but sometimes (as in the case of the artist) it causes disasters.

It has now been discovered that strong and weak stimuli provoke opposite reactions. This has created a fresh interest in homeopathy which is based on the assumption that drugs which produce certain symptoms when taken in very small quantities, provoke just the opposite symptoms when taken in bigger quantities.

The masseurs who treat diseases by massaging the body are also becoming popular.

There are also dieticians who ask us to eat various things and avoid eating other things in order to preserve good health. But all dieticians do not agree about the articles to be consumed or avoided.

True science is always in quest of something new. Science becomes dangerous only when it imagines that it has reached its goal. The unknown is always greater than the known.

We are all afraid of death. This is exploited by any trader to rob us of money, any blackguard to gratify his cruelty and any tyrant to make us his slaves. We should get rid of this terror.

Shaw then sums up his conclusions as follows :

(1) Nothing is more dangerous than a poor doctor : not even a poor employer or a poor landlord.

(2) A person who derives his income from the ill-health of the public is most anti-social.

(3) An illness is a misconduct and a doctor is a party to it, unless he notifies every case to the Public Health Authority.

(4) Treat every death as a probable murder and punish the doctor (if he is proved guilty after an enquiry) by striking him off the register.

(5) Decide how many doctors the community needs, register them and then treat them as civil servants with a dignified living wage paid out of public funds.

(6) All medical specialists should be paid by the state. They should not be allowed to exploit the patients.

(7) A private practitioner should be treated like a private executioner.

(8) Persons who profess to be able to cure diseases should be treated like fortune tellers.

(9) The public should be informed of the illness of doctors or their families.

(10) Below the name plates of doctors should be inscribed the words : "Remeber that I too am mortal".

(11) A person who is suffering from an incurable disease and whose treatment and care cost more than what he is worth, should not be kept alive, beyond reason, by the activity of others.

(12) Do not try to live for ever. This is impossible.

(13) Use your energy to the maximum limit as long as you live. Wear yourself out before you die.

(14) The nation must look after the health of the mothers and the nutrition, teeth and eye-sight of all the children. If the state does not take care of these things the citizens will be unsound and so the whole nation will be unsound.

Postscript

In a postscript written in 1930, Shaw says that as time passes there is greater and greater need to bring the medical profession under effective public control.

In another postcript written in 1933, Shaw wrote that the condition of the medical profession was becoming worse. The unregistered practitioners were earning huge amounts. The doctors had a vested interest in disease and so the public was suffering. Shaw suggested that the General Medical Council should be composed of hard-working representatives of the suffering public. A National Health Service should take over the work of treating all diseases.

(15) Every effort should be made to prolong the life of a person who is useful to the community. But if a person is an invalid or hopelessly ill and costs more than he is worth, society should not make unreasonable efforts to prolong his life.

(16) Do not try to live for ever. You cannot.

(17) Use your health, even to the point of wearing it out. Use your energy fully. Do not try to outlive yourself.

(18) You can be a good citizen if you are born of healthy parents. Your mother must have a good doctor. You should go to a school where they have a school clinic where your nutrition, teeth, eye-sight and other important matters will be attended to. This must be done at public expense, otherwise it will not be done at all. If you do all this, you can become a sound citizen.

Postscript. 1930

In 1930 Shaw wrote a postscript in which he said that during the years, since the Preface was written, the need for bringing the medical profession under responsible and effective public control, had become more pressing than ever before.

Postcript. 1933.

In a postscript written in 1933, Shaw said that the condition of the medical profession had become so scandalous that unregistered practitioners obtained higher fees and were more popular with educated patients than registered ones. He proposed

that the General Medical Council in England should be composed of hard-working representatives of the suffering public. The private medical practitioners should be excluded from it and should be called in only for technical advice. Until this is done, the public will continue to suffer due to the vested interest of the private practitioners in illness.

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THE SUMMARY OF THE PLAY (WITH COMMENTS)

Act I

The play opens on the 15th of June, 1903, in the consulting room of Dr. Ridgeon. Redpenny, a young medical student who acts as Dr. Ridgeon's Laboratory Assistant and also writes his letters and does other miscellaneous things, is busy with answering the doctor's letters. Emmy is an old and ugly serving woman. She has moles all over her face and hair is growing out of them. She comes with a duster and starts cleaning the whole place. Redpenny asks her not to disturb him because Dr. Ridgeon is about to come, and he has not completed the letters. Emmy tells him that Dr. Ridgeon will never come. Redpenny gets upset. Then Emmy explains that Dr. Ridgeon has been knighted in the Birthday Honours and will now be known as Sir Colenso Ridgeon. He is very glad. Emmy says that she is taken aback. She always thought that his researches were humbug. Now he would laugh at her. Sir Patrick Cullen came very early and has left his congratulations. She is sure that others would be coming now to congratulate him. She tells Redpenny that there is a lady waiting at the door to see the doctor. Redpenny tells her that the doctor can not see anybody and she must not disturb him.

Sir Colenso Ridgeon now comes. He is a man of fifty. He is shy and sensitive. In figure and manner he is more the young man than the titled physician. The lines on his face have been caused by overwork.

Emmy treats Ridgeon as a nurse treats a small child. She asks him whether he has eaten his two eggs and put on his clean vest. Then she calls him her "ducky diamond" and instructs him not to dirty his hands because people are coming to congratulate him.

Dr. Schutzmacher comes to congratulate him. Emmy calls him "Shoemaker." Ridgeon and he were class-fellows in the

medical college and are meeting after thirty years. Dr. Schutzmacher set up his practice in a small industrial town. He made his fortune by means of just two words : "Cure Guaranteed". On his shop window he had put the words : "Advice and medicine six pence. Cure Guaranteed." The patients were attracted because his treatment was cheap and he gave a guarantee that they would be cured. He explains that most people get cured by themselves if they are careful. He gave Parrish's Chemical Food to all his patients irrespective of their diseases, and more than 90% of them got cured. He offers to take Ridgeon in his motor car for an outing on a week-end and then leaves.

Redpenny informs Ridgeon that Sir Patrick Cullen had come early in the morning to congratulate him. He calls him "Old Paddy Cullen". Ridgeon rebukes him for not having any respect for senior doctors and remarks, "That is what makes the medical student the most disgusting figure in modern civilization."

Sir Patrick Cullen comes now. He is 20 years older than Ridgeon. He is whimsical but has common sense. He originally came from Ireland but has now become thoroughly English. He is rough to others but fatherly to Ridgeon.

Sir Patrick did not believe in progress. He says that most discoveries are made regularly every fifteen years. What Ridgeon has discovered had actually been discovered one hundred and fifty years ago. It is nothing but inoculation. His father used to practise it till 1840 when it was made criminal. It almost broke his heart. Ridgeon had brought them back to inoculation.

Sir Patrick then asks Ridgeon whether he could really cure consumption. He says that many persons say that they can cure T. B. but people still keep on dying of it. He had sent Jane Marsh, his washerwoman's daughter, to Ridgeon. She had a tubercular ulcer on her arm. Ridgeon tried his inoculation on her but instead of curing her, it only rotted her arm. Ridgeon says that that was an experiment which showed that inoculation that ought to cure, sometimes kills.

Ridgeon explains that his great discovery is "The Opsonin Index." Opsonin is what you butter the disease germs with so that the white blood corpuscles or phagocytes might eat them. The body manufactures the butter or Opsonin itself but this manufacture goes on in nature by ups and down. If the inoculation is given when the patient is in the upgrade or the positive phase, the patient is cured. If you inoculate when the patient is

in the down grade or the negative phase you kill him. By testing the patient's blood his Opsonin index can be found out. If the figure is 1 and the patient is inoculated he will be cured. If the figure is below 8 and the patient is inoculated he will be killed. Ridgeon claims that that is the greatest discovery since the discovery of the circulation of the blood.

Emmy comes in to tell him that there is a lady waiting to see him. He says that he can see no one. Then she says that Dr. Walpole is waiting to see him. He tells her to send him in after two minutes. Emmy says that Walpole is talking to that poor lady.

Ridgeon tells Sir Patrick that he is not well. All the tests have been done and they have revealed nothing. He feels strange aches. He does not know whether there is trouble in his heart or the liver or the spine. He also hears pretty tunes.

Sir Patrick tells him that it is good that he does not hear supernatural voices. If his patient tells him that he has made a greater discovery than Harvey's and hears voices, he becomes sure that the person is mad and he locks him up. There is something wrong with his common sense. He might make a fool of himself.

Sir Patrick says that chloroform has enabled every fool to be a surgeon. He finds out some organ in the body which can be removed without causing any trouble, and makes money by performing those operations. Walpole has got hold of something he calls the "Nuciform Soc" and he has made the operation to remove it a fashion. He charges five hundred guineas for one operation. People boast about the operations that have been performed on them.

Walpole now comes in. He is a strong and energetic man. He is confident about everything that he does. His dress shows that he is very rich.

Walpole congratulates Ridgeon and says that he deserved the knighthood for his personal qualities (and not for his medical discovery).

Ridgeon thanks him and tells him that he is not feeling well. Walpole immediately tells him that he is suffering from blood poisoning. He suggests that he should get his Nuciform Sac removed. Sir Patrick asks Walpole whether he has got his own Nuciform Sac removed. He replies that 5% of the people do

not have this sac, and he is one of them. He says that he has talked to the lady waiting to see Ridgeon, about the disease of her husband. He can be cured if his Nuciform Sac is removed.

Walpole asks Sir Patrick whether he has liked the surgical saw that he has invented. Sir Patrick feels that nothing new is being invented in modern times. People are giving new names to old things and calling them new. For instance, he had seen the same type of saw sixtyfive years ago. Only in those days it was called a cabinet maker's "jimmy".

Walpole thinks that general practitioners should not be allowed to touch a patient except under the orders of a specialist.

Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonington is announced, but he does not come in at once. He is talking to the lady outside. He enters after a few minutes. He is tall and somewhat fat. He is in his sixties. He is very good-natured. He has been very successful in his medical practice but he knows nothing of medicine. He talks eloquently of science but he knows nothing of medical science.

B. B. tells Walpole that he is absent-minded when performing operations. He sent him an opera singer for a throat operation and Walpole removed her nuciform sac. Still she recovered and thinks him the greatest surgeon alive.

B. B. is the physician to the royal family. Prince Charles had some fever. B. B. suspected that it was typhoid. He got a tube of Ridgeon's serum which was meant for T. B. and gave it to him like any other anti-toxin. Ridgeon says that his anti-toxin is dangerous. It has to be given at a particular time after proper tests. B. B. ridicules the idea. Even an apple can be dangerous if it is taken at bed-time. He thinks that all anti-toxins are the same. He says, "There are only two rules for anti-toxins. First, don't be afraid of them; and second, inject them a quarter of an hour before meals, three times a day." Ridgeon does not agree. But B. B. says that the proof his theory was that the prince became all right. He told them that it was all due to Ridgeon's medicines and so Ridgeon was knighted.

Ridgeon says that he is not all right probably because of overwork. B. B. does not agree. He says that all diseases are caused by germs. The remedy is very simple: "Find the germ and kill it." Sir Patrick wants to know how he can see the

germ. B. B. says that we should stain it before we can see it. We cannot see some of the germs because they cannot be stained. Moreover, every disease germ has an imitator which looks just like the disease germ but is harmless. B. B. thinks that Science has an answer for everything. Doctors of the earlier generation sometimes cured patients but they were not scientific. That is why he admires Ridgeon's discovery.

Dr. Blenkinsop now comes in. He looks shabby. He is cheaply fed and cheaply clothed. The lines on his face show that he has had financial worries all his life. He was Ridgeon's class-fellow in the medical college but he has done very poorly as a doctor. But he is an honest man. He confesses that he does not understand Ridgeon's great discovery. He has not read one medical book since he got his degree. But he has a lot of experience of treating actual cases.

Walpole says that physicians see only the outside of the patient. So they can never diagnose a case correctly. It is only a surgeon who sees the insides of the patient who can find out what is wrong with him. When you operate upon a person you find that it is only a case of blood poisoning.

Blenkinsop says that his patients are all poor people who cannot afford a costly treatment. Nor can they go to Switzerland or to Egypt for a change. He cannot afford good food himself and so he is always ill and so he does not inspire confidence among his patients. He generally recommends to his patients that they should take a pound of greengages everyday half an hour before lunch. He cannot prescribe costly medicines to his patients. Ridgeon asks him whether he can help him in any way. He suggests that Ridgeon might give some of his old clothes to him.

B. B. describes his theory of medicine. He feels that drugs are all delusions. The chemists' shops should all be closed. All diseases are caused by germs. The way to fight a disease is to find the germ and kill it. Nature has produced bodies which were formerly called white blood corpuscles but are now called phagocytes. They devour and destroy the disease germs. So one should find a germ of the disease, prepare an anti-toxin from it and inject it three times a day before meals. The result is that the phagocytes are stimulated and they kill the disease germs.

Sir Patrick says that his father used to say that smallpox in-oculation was not good only for smallpox but for all diseases.

B. B. is thrilled by this idea. He says that the anti-toxin may be for any disease. When it is indjected in the body, it stimulates the phagocytes and they kill the germs of all diseases. He describes his own experiences. He had a missionary who was suffering from tatanus and a beadle who was suffering from typhoid. But B. B. inoculated the tetanus case with the typhoid anti-toxin and the typhoid case with the anti-tetanus serum. And both the patients became all right. It does not matter which serum you use. It would stimulate the phagocytes and they would kill all disease germs. Thus he treated a scarlet fever case with a sample of hydrophobia serum from the Pasteur Institute and the patient was cured. He injected Ridgeon's anti-T. B. serum to Prince Charles who had simple fever and the prince recovered and Ridgeon was knighted.

The other doctors are shocked at B. B.'s theories but he seems to be triumphant.

Emmy comes to tell Walpole that the motor-car has come for him and the horses of Sir Patrick's carriage are being frightened. Walpole takes his leave. When he has gone, B. B. comments that Walpole has no intellect. He is "a mere surgeon". He performs operations well but that is only "manual labour". The "Nuciform sac" is utter nonsense. There is no such thing. It is a shocking fraud. B. B. leaves after commenting that Ridgeon's patient outside is a "charming woman."

Ridgeon tells Emmy to tell that woman outside to go away as he cannot see her. Emmy says that she is not in a hurry and will wait as long as is necessary.

Blenkinsop goes.

Ridgeon is shocked to hear from B. B. how he has been knighted. He says, "We are not a profession ; we are a conspiracy". He says that a doctor like B. B. should know the difference between a vaccine and an anti-toxin. "To put a tube of serum into his hands is murder : simple murder".

Emmy comes back to tell Sir Patrick that his horses are getting restless. He shouts at her and calls her an ugly woman. She replies that he is no beauty. She tells them that they are wasting their time talking when they should be with their patients.

After Sir Patrick leaves, Emmy persuades Ridgeon to see Jennifer. She has bribed Emmy. She comes in. She is an

arrestingly good-looking young woman. She has a portfolio with her.

Ridgeon is attracted towards her and in self-defence he becomes stiff and formal. He tells her bluntly that he cannot take another case. She starts crying and appeals to him to cure her husband who is suffering from T.B. Ridgeon tells her that he has ten patients on whom he is trying his new treatment; and he thinks that he can save their lives. He cannot cope with an eleventh patient. They have been selected out of fifty cases because their lives are worth saving. They are like ten shipwrecked sailors on a small raft. If an eleventh one is taken in, the raft might sink.

Ridgeon tells her that he has not patented his discovery and any doctor can try this treatment. But outside his own hospital there is nobody who has as yet mastered the Opsonin treatment.

He wants to dismiss her but she appeals to him to see some of her husband's drawings. His drawings will, she is sure, convince him that he is a great artist and really worth saving. He sees Dubedat's portrait of Jennifer and likes it very much. He enquires whether it is for sale. She tells him to take it and take all the other drawings but save his life. He now becomes interested in her and her husband.

Ridgeon had told Redpenny when Jennifer was coming in to come and tell him after five minutes that he was required at the hospital for an urgent case. That was his device to dismiss her. Redpenny accordingly comes and tells him that there is a patient on the point of death and he is required immediately. Now Ridgeon has become interested in Jennifer and so he shouts at Redpenny and asks him to get out. Mrs. Dubedat is worried about the dying patient and wants to go. But Ridgeon asks her to sit down and tells her that he himself had asked Redpenny to say that because he wanted to get rid of her. She is shocked at the falsehood.

Ridgeon wants to be convinced that Dubedat's life is more worth saving now. She tells him that he is a great genius. She had married him only because she thought she could help him financially so that he could easily do his great work. He is only twenty-three and his whole life is ahead of him. She asks him whether he would see him.

He asks her whether he is well enough to come to a dinner at a famous hotel –Star and Garter—at Richmond. She says that he

would definitely come. He says that in celebration of his knighthood he is giving a grand dinner at the Star and Garter. As he is a bachelor, she can entertain for him. All the eminent doctors would be there. He would place the case before them and they would together decide what to do.

She is very happy. She asks him about the fee. He says that he would take Dubedat's painting of Jennifer for the entire treatment. He asks her to be careful because tuberculosis is infectious.

When he is alone, he thinks of the formula of his jewish friend, Dr. Schutzmacher : "Advice and medicine six pence. Cure Guaranteed". In this case it is going to be : "Consultation free. Cure Guaranteed."

Act II

The scene is laid on the terrace of the Star and Garter, the luxurious hotel by the side of River Thames in Richmond. The dinner which Ridgeon has given in honour of his knighthood is over. All the important doctor friends of Ridgeon like Sir Patrick, B. B., Walpole, Schutzmacher and Blenkinsop are there. Mr. and Mrs. Dubedat have also been invited.

It is about 11 p. m. There is a fine moonlight. The dinner is over. Sir Patrick, B. B. Walpole, Ridgeon and Schutzmacher are relaxing after the grand dinner and the fine drinks. Jennifer comes from inside ready to leave Ridgeon, requests her to stay for half an hour more. But Sir Patrick says that she should take her husband home and put him to bed. B. B. says that Sir Patrick's orders have to be obeyed. Walpole offers to take Mr. & Mrs. Dubedat home in his car but Sir Patrick says that he should take them in his car up to the station from where they can go by train.

Mrs. Dubedat asks the doctors what they think of her husband. B. B., Walpole and Ridgeon say that he is a charming person and it was a privilege to have met him. Sir Patrick only grunts but says that he admires his drawings well. Ridgeon assures her that he is worth saving and will and shall be saved. She is very happy and very grateful to them. She is overwhelmed and gets tears of joy.

The doctors are tremendously impressed by Louis's artistic ability. He has made sketches of the doctors on the menu cards.

B, B., Walpole wants him to sign his name under the sketches. Dr. Schutzmacher is not happy with his sketch. So Ridgeon takes it. Louis talks to the eminent doctors like an equal. He has tremendous self-confidence. When he coughs due to his T. B., Ridgeon assures his wife that he will make that cough all right.

When Mr. & Mrs. Dubedat are gone, Ridgeon declares that Louis is definitely a genius and he is really worth saving. Sir Patrick says that two things can be wrong with a man—his money matters and his relations with women.

Walpole told them that Dubedat had told him that he was very economical and had no vices but he wanted that his wife should be well-dressed. Walpole had offered to lend him twenty pounds. He took it and was very happy.

Then B. B. said that he had borrowed ten pounds from him. He had told him that Mrs. Dubedat liked him very much and he should occasionally come and talk to her.

Then Blenkinsop, who has been running after Dubedat, comes back. He is a poor man. Dubedat had asked him to lend him half a crown to tip the chambermaid and promised to return it in five minutes as his wife had his purse. Blenkinsop paid it to him and he did not return it. Now the poor fellow had only two pence with him to get back with. Ridgeon said that he could lend him money but Blenkinsop was definite that he would never borrow money from friends. He would go by train as far as his two pence could take him and then he would walk. Walpole offers to take him to his house in his motor car.

Then Walpole asks Schutzmacher whether Dubedat borrowed money from him. He says that Dubedat had told him that the Jews were the only people who appreciated art and culture. He had added that his wife always admired Jews. Then he had asked him to lend him £ 50 on the security of his drawings. Schutzmacher refused to lend him this money. Then Dubedat said that a Jew could not understand the feelings of a gentleman. Schutzmacher had told him that he would have lent money to him if he had been a jew. Dubedat then started persuading him that he was one of the chosen people (Jews). Then he asked only for a few sovereigns,

Dr. Schutzmacher complained that the Christians condemned the Jews if they lent money on interest and they condemned them also if they did not lend money. An Englishman if he

needs money would sign any agreement with no intention of carrying it out. But if a Jew borrows money he pays interest on it and returns it. If he thinks that he cannot pay the money back, he begs it as a gift.

While this talk was going on a hotel maid, Minnie Tinwell, a pretty girl of about 25, came to Ridgeon. She wanted to know the adress of Louis Dubedat. She shocked them all by saying that she was Dubedat's wife. If they did not believe her she could show them her marriage certificate. She reavealed that he had married her and spent her thirty pounds and all the money that he could borrow in three weeks on their honeymoon. After all the money was finished she came to the hotel to work and he went to London to do his paintings and he did not write to her at all. She wanted to know his address.

Sir Patrick now declares that this fellow is a 'damned young blackguard.' When Blenkinsop requests Walpole to give him a cigarette, Walpole discovers that he had given his gold cigarette case to Dubedat and he had not returned it.

Ridgeon is shocked at Dubedat's immorality and his unscrupulousness in money matters and asks the other doctors whether this fellow is worth saving. When Blenkinsop hears that Dubedat is suffering from tuberculosis and Ridgeon is in a position to cure him, he reveals that he is also suffering from the same disease. The doctors are all shocked to hear this. Blenkinsop explains that he is too poor to take an expensive cure. In fact he does not have an overcoat to protect his chest. He manages with brown paper.

One by one all the guests leave. When Sir Patrick and Ridgeon are left alone, the former asks, "Well, Mr. Saviour of Lives, which is it to be ? That honest decent man Blenkinsop or that rotten blackguard of an artist, eh ?" This gives rise to the dilemma. Ridgeon finds that this is very difficult to decide. Blenkinsop is a decent man but he has no talent. Dubedat is a rotten blackguard but he is a great artist. Sir Patrick says that Jennifer thinks that her husband is a god. What will happen to her when she finds out his real nature ? Ridgeon says that life will become hell for her when she knows that her husband is an immoral cheat.

Sir Patrick asks him to hold the scales even between the two men.

Ridgeon now reveals another complication. He is in love with Jennifer and if Dubedat dies he might marry his widow. He is sure that she likes him.

Sir Patrick asks him why he cannot save both the men. He says that he can squeeze in only one more patient. Sir Patrick says that the choice, then, is between a decent man and a lot of fine pictures. Ridgeon asks him whether he should kill Dubedat. Sir Patrick asks him not to talk nonsense. He should leave him in B.B.'s hands. Ridgeon says that B.B. is an eminent physician but realizes that is the best way to kill Dubedat.

Act III

The Third Act takes us to Dubedat's studio. It is a typical poor artist's studio. There is an easel on which the canvas (on which the painting is made) is kept. Jars of colours and tubes of paints are lying about. Pieces of smuged with paints are lying here and there. In a chair on a dais (called "the throne") Jennifer is sitting. Dubedat is painting a piece of brocade which he has placed on his wife's body.

Jennifer is talking to him about his habit of borrowing money. She wants to promise never to borrow money from anyone else. If he needs money he should ask her. He makes a promise without the least intention of keeping it. He thinks that it is mean to keep on asking his wife for money and so he sometimes asks others. In the next season he would have an exhibition of his paintings and then all his money difficulties would be solved.

Jennifer asks him to complete the paintings for which Maclean had paid an advance. He says that he has got all the money from them and there was no need to hurry up. When she tells him that Maclean had reminded her about the drawings, he loses his temper and calls him impudent and wants to throw up the job and return him the money. Jennifer reminds him that they can not afford to do it. He wishes that he was strong enough to work steadily and earn enough to purchase all the finest things for her. She says that she wants only him and nothing else.

Ridgeon comes in. Dubedat addresses him as "Ridgeon" and not "Sir Colenso". Mrs. Dubedat goes away and leaves the docter to examine the patient.

Dubedat tells Ridgeon that Jennifer has taken quite a fancy for him. He is always busy in paintings and she has nobody to talk to. She keeps coming to him for money and he has no money to give to her. That is the problem in their house. Ridgeon

says that he understood that she had some property. He says that he does not want to touch that.

Ridgeon wants to examine his lungs but Louis tells him that the main problem in that house was not lungs but bills. He asks Ridgeon whether he can lend him one hundred and fifty pounds. He is prepared to give him a post-dated cheque for £ 200 for next October. That is the time her dividends come. The Bank would dishonour the cheque. Then he should tell Jennifer that unless she paid the money, Louis would be put in prison. She will immediately pay him. Thus he would make a profit of £ 50. Ridgeon is shocked and tells him that he would not give him a farthing. Then he asks Ridgeon to ask his patients to purchase his paintings. He tells Louis that he is a doctor and not a commercial traveller. Dubedat unashamedly tells him that he must be knowing a lot of private things about the patients which they would not want to be revealed. So he can blackmail them into purchasing his paintings. Ridgeon is about to explode when Sir Patrick, B.B. and Welpole come in. Ridgeon tells Welpole what Louis had just told him. Louis tells him that it was not honourable for him to tell everyone what he had told him in confidence.

Louis is not overawed by the doctors but talks to them with easy familiarity. The doctors sit down at different places in the studio.

Walpole asks Louis to give him back his gold cigarette case. Louis gives him a pawn ticket. He had pawned the cigarette case and borrowed money on it. Walpale is shocked and at the same time fascinated by Louis. Ridgeon tells him that he did not mind his borrowing money from his rich friends but he must pay back the half-crown which he had borrowed from poor Blenkinsop. Louis puts his hand in his pocket but it is empty. So he borrows a half crown from Walpole in order to pay Ridgeon.

Sir Patrick now asks Louis about his relations with Minnie Tinwell. He is not upset. He only tells them that Minnie is a nice girl. Walpole tells him not to bluff because they had seen her marriage certificate. Louis asks them whether they had seen Jennifer's marriage certificate. They ask him whether he implied that Jennifer was living with him without being married to him. He cooly asks them : "Why not ?" They are all shocked and Ridgeon tells him, "I loathe you".

Louis tells Ridgeon that he had only asked them, "Have you seen Jennifer's marriage lines ?" and they had concluded that she did not have any and was an immoral girl. A decent man would think that she carried her marriage certificate in her face and in her character. They think that morality only consists in suspecting other people of not being legally married.

He tells them that Minnie Tinwell had married the Steward of a ship but had not seen him for three years. So she thought that she was free to marry again. Dubedat met her and she fell in love with him. He was already marrid to Jennifer but he did not tell her this. He went through the ceremony of marriage with Minnie. They first spent her mony (£ 30) and then he borrowed money to spend on her. When the entire money was spent in three weeks she went back to her hotel and he came back to Jennifer. He feels that he made a great sacrifice in order to give happiness to poor Minnie. If the police had come to know that he was already married he would have been put in prison.

The doctors now feel that if they take up this question, Minnie would be sent to prison and Louis would be but in prison and poor Jennifer would be disgraced and made most unhappy. But Ridgeon decides that he would not do anything to cure "this reptile". Walpole was prepared to remove his Nuciform sac but Louis asks him how much he would pay him to permit him to cut him up. Walpole decides that he would have nothing to do with him.

B. B. says that he never says "No" even to a scoundrel when he comes to him for treatment. His practice is among the rich people who have all types of vices. He does not go into the question whether the life is worth saving. If he were to investigate private life of his patients he would come to the conclusion that they would be "better dead". Louis is "vicious and ignorant" but so are 75% of his patients. Dubedat's moral character is nothing to him. He takes his body as a battlefield where the phagocytes are fighting against the tuberculosis germs. So he decides to take up Dubedat's case.

While all this discussion was going on, Louis Dubedat was making a sketch of Sir Patrick. Everyone likes it. Dubedat offers to sell it to Sir Patrick for twelve guineas. Sir Patrick refuses to take it. B.B. takes it and presents it to Sir Patrick. But he does not pay twelve guineas to Dubedat. He says that it

would be adjusted in his fees. Dubedat is very angry and calls it "theft".

Dubedat offers to make a sketch of Walpole for ten guineas. Walpole agrees but would pay on delivery. Dubedat asks him, "Have you no confidence in my honour ?" Walpole replies, "None whatever."

The doctors are to leave. Louis Dubedat wants them to meet Jennifer before they go. He tells them that they have been abusing him and he did not mind. But before Jennifer they should behave properly because they were "supposed to be gentlemen". Ridgeon only says, "Damn his impudence."

Jennifer comes in a cheerful mood. She shakes hands with B. B., Walpole and Sir Patrick. She says that before the dinner at Richmond she used to be terribly afraid. But now she has no fear. She wants to know the result of their examination of her husband.

Walpole says that he has an appointment and so he must go. The other doctors will treat Louis and if he is needed they know where to find him. Jennifer is puzzled at his formal manner. Sir Patrick says that he has given up practice and so he cannot treat Louis. He also leaves.

B. B. tells her that he will treat her husband. She says that she thought that Ridgeon was going to treat him. But B. B. explains that Ridgeon is chiefly interested in research. His proper place is the bacteriological lab. His proper place is near the bed-side of the patients. He assures her that her husband will be treated as if he were a member of the royal family. He asks her if she would like to move to a place nearer to him. She wants to stay in that very flat and studio. B. B. agrees. He says, "If the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet will come to the mountain." The doctor will come and treat this patient at his own lodging. He would start the treatment soon. His treatment consisted of stimulating the phagocytes. So he asked Ridgeon to send him a tube of some strong anti-toxin on Tuesday. He left telling Jennifer, "There is no tonic like a charming woman; no medicine like cheerfulness, no resource like science."

When Ridgeon asked her why she was feeling disappointed she told him that she had set her heart on *his* curing Louis. B.B. was a great physician but she had a strong instinct that he alone

could cure him. Why could he not take up his case himself? Ridgeon replied that his hands were full and he could not take up another case.

She reminds him that at Richmond he had promised to undertake Louis's treatment. He says that he has taken up the case of his old friend, Blenkinsop, who was also suffering from T. B. He is an excellent and honest man.

This makes Jennifer very angry. She says that this was envious, mean, cruel on his part. Could he not forgive him for being superior to him, for being cleverer, for being braver, for being a great artist. Ridgeon replies that he can forgive him for all that.

She says that she knows his little faults. He shocks people by borrowing money from them because he cannot understand the value that ordinary people set on it. Now he has promised never to borrow money and he is incapable of breaking his promise. Ridgeon asks her whether that is his only weakness. She replies that he has also a weakness for women. But that is not his fault. They adore him and are always laying traps for him.

Jennifer tells him how she came to marry him. She was an only child. She had beauty and some money. She wanted to help some man of genius who was being kept down due to poverty. Louis came to her like a child. His paintings were wonderful. He was younger and had no money. She proposed marriage and he is her great hero. He is still quite unspoiled, a man in his thoughts, a great poet and artist in his dreams and a child in his ways. She gave him all that she had so that he might grow to his full height. If he does something ignoble she would go back to Cornwell and commit suicide. She makes a pathetic appeal to him to take up his case and leave Blenkinsop to B. B.

Ridgeon asks her to believe that his desire is to serve her in the most faithful friendship. He assures her that her hero will be preserved to her and adds that the one chance of preserving the hero lies in his being in the care of B. B. She believes him and kisses his hand. He hopes that this will be a lasting friendship. Mrs. Dubedat says that her friendships would only end with death. Ridgeon leaves with a look of pity at her which she does not understand. What Ridgeon really meant was that Jennifer had made a hero of a rascal like Louis. If he lives longer she will come to know all his weaknesses and she will kill

herself. So the best way to preserve her hero was to kill Louis Dubedat. She does not understand that under the treatment of B. B. Louis is going to die. So he has a look of pity at her.

But Ridgeon was wrong about Mrs. Dubedat. She knew all the weaknesses of her husband and yet regarded him as a hero. She would have never been disillusioned. Louis Dubedat would have remained her hero for ever.

Act IV

Louis Dubedat has been under the treatment of B. B. only for three days and he is dying. Ordinarily he would have died in three months but B. B. injected Ridgeon's opsonin inoculation in the wrong way. Ridgeon's discovery was that if the opsonin was given when nature's butter factory was on the up-grade the phogocytes would eat the buttered microbes and the patient would be cured. If the opsonin was inoculated when nature's butter factory was on the down-grade the patient would be killed. B. B. inoculated Louis when his body was in the negative phase and so he developed galloping. T. B. and was on the point of death.

The scene is laid in the studio. Death seems to be ruling the place. Walpole and Ridgeon come in hurriedly. They are told that B. B. and Sir Patrick have been there for half an hour. Sir Patrick comes out with bad news on his face. He sends Walpole in and then tells Ridgeon that what had happened to Jane Marsh's arm has happened to Louis. Within three days he has developed galloping consumption and is dying. Ridgeon is certain that B. B. must have inoculated him in the negative phase. Sir Patrick is certain that the lad would die within a few hours. Ridgeon says that he should die before his wife finds out his weaknesses and is disillusioned about him. B. B. now comes. As a man he is sad but as a doctor he is happy because this has been a very interesting case. He says that he gave the inoculation to stimulate the phagocytes but he is not sure whether he has stimulated the microbes. Have the phagocytes eaten up the red blood corpuscles ? That is possible because the patient looks pale. Or have they eaten up the lungs or each other. He wants to write a paper on this case.

Walpole comes and tells B. B. bluntly that he has killed Louis. It was a case of blood poisoning but it was too late to operate upon him.

Sir Patrick and Ridgeon go in to see the patient. B. B. then tells Walpole that he would never use Ridgeon's stuff again. It was that inoculation which brought Louis near death.

Jennifer comes to them wearing a nurse's apron. She says that a newspaper correspondent wants to interview Louis. Walpole says that he would drive him out. But Jennifer says that Louis insists on seeing him. And Louis wants to come to the studio because he says that he wants to die in his studio. The doctors say that there was no harm in that.

Jennifer tells Walpole to call the newspaper-man but to tell him not to exhaust Louis by talking much.

Jennifer is still hopeful and she tells B. B. that she would take Louis to Cornwall and there he would become all right.

Walpole brings the newspaperman into the studio. This person is illiterate. He keeps a notebook but he cannot write anything correctly in it. He does not understand anything. He is not able to describe anything he sees accurately. He cannot report accurately anyting that he hears. Walpole has told him that Louis is suffering from tubercle germs. He thinks that this is "cubicle". He has never heard of tuberculosis. When Walpole tells him that one of the doctors treating Louis is Ridgeon, he hears it as "Pigeon". Walpole snatches his notebook from him and writes down all the particulars in it himself. He says that this fellow belongs to "an illiterate profession, with no qualifications and no public register". Walpole warns him not to talk much to Louis because he may die any moment.

This news does not make the newspaper-man sad. On the other hand, he is happy. "I am in luck today" he says, because he feels that he would be able to send the news to his paper at once. He wants to take a photograph of Walpole but he is snubbed and asked to sit down.

Dubedat is wheeled in an invalid's chair by Mrs. Dubedat and Sir Ralph. Louis is physically extremely weak but his mind is active. He finds drama even in death. Everyone, except Ridgeon, is impressed. Louis is happy to be in the studio.

The newspaper-man asks him for his plans for the season. He gives a plain answer—"My plans for the season are very simple. I am going to die."

Then Louis asks Jennifer to promise to him that she will not remain a widow. He wants her to look beautiful like a person

who has been in heaven. She must put on beautiful dresses and jewels. That will make him immortal. He is reminded of an incident in Cornwal narrated by Jennifer. When they lighted the first fire of winter they could see through the window lovely flames on a bush. This was like God appearing to Moses in the form of a flame on a bud. He wants to be like that burning bush. He wants to be burnt.

He tells her a secret. He thought that their marriage was only a show and he would break loose. But now he wants to be a part of her. He wants her to marry again because people who have found marriage happy always marry again.

Louis forgives everyone including Ridgeon. He wants to be immortal in the heart of his beautiful Jennifer. He is not afraid of death and not ashamed of his actions in this world. He says, "In my own real world I have never done anything wrong, never denied my faith, never been untrue to myself." Then he holds up his hands and utters his creed—"I believe in Michael Angelo, Valasquez, and Rembrendt ; in the might of design, the mystry of colour, the redemption of all things by Beauty everlasting, and the message of Art that has made these hands blessed. Amen, Amen", He asks Jennifer to place his head in her bosom and there he dies peacefully.

When Jennifer realizes that he is dead she rises and goes inside. B.B. says that the boy died splendidly. Sir Patrick says, "That is how the wicked die...But it is not for us to judge him now. He is in another world now."

And Walpole immediately says, "Borrowing his first five-pound note probably." Ridgeon says, "The most tragic thing in the world is a man of genius who is not also a man of honour."

The newspaper man has understood Dubedat wrongly. He thinks that Louis has asked his wife to be in mourning and never to marry again. And now in a heartless manner he wants to ask Mrs. Dubedat how it feels to be a widow. He is asked to get out of the house.

B. B. is full of admiration for the way the poor young fellow died. But Sir Patrick says, "It matters very litte how a man dies. What matters is, how he lives".

B. B. quotes and misquotes profusely from Shakespeare.

Mrs. Dubedat comes from the inner room beautifully dressed and looking radiant. She says that she wants to shake hands with

his freinds who have shared with her a great experience, a great privilege and a great happiness. She adds, "Life will always be beautiful to us : Death will always be beautiful to us". She shakes hands with Sir Patrick, B B. and Walpole but refuses to shake hands with Ridgeon who was *not* Dubedat's friend.

When they all leave she covers the dead body with a piece of purple silk.

Act V

This is the scene of the one-man show of Dubedat's paintings. It is laid in one of the smaller Bond Street Picture Galleries. The walls are covered with Dubedat's works.

Jennifer, beautifully dressed and apparently very happy and prosperous comes into the gallery. She asks the Secretary whether the catalogues have been printed. The Secretary says that they have not come yet but he would get them. The Secretary asks her whether she has seen the notices of these paintings which appeared in the art magazines called *Brush, Crayon* and *The Easel.* She says that the reviews are disgraceful. They have not given enough praise to the artist in spite of the fact that on the press day she had entertained the art critics well.

The Secretary tells her that advance copies of her book on her late husband have come. She takes a copy and is so excited that she runs with it to a private room.

Ridgeon comes. The Secretary permits him to look around. He sees the new book. It is called "The story of a King of Men, by His Wife." The Secretary says that he knew Louis even better than his wife did, in some ways. Ridgeon says, "So did I". The Secretary runs to the press to get the catalogues. Ridgeon goes round seeing the paintings. At one stage he sighs because he cannot help admiring the merit of the work.

Jennifer comes back and sits in the Secretary's chair. She is not aware of Ridgeon's presence and is admiring her own book.

Ridgeon after seeing one of the good drawings utters the words "Clever brute". She now recognizes him and hears the words and feels as if he had struck her. Ridgeon turns round and sees Jennifer and begs her pardon.

Jennifer controls herself. She tells Ridgeon that she had met Dr. Blenkinsop the previous day. He looked the picture of

health and strength and prosperity. Ridgeon deserved congratulations on this wonderful cure. Ridgeon says that Blenkinsop had been lucky. He had been made the Medical Officer of Health. Jennifer says that Blenkinsop was of the opinion that private doctors were ignorant licensed murderers.

Ridgeon says that she probably wants to reproach him about something. She says that it is too late for reproaches. The trouble with persons like him is that they feel that living things have no souls. Brutes like dogs have wonderfu feelings. The person whom she loved most had a sort of beauty and affectionateness that only animals have. But doctors like Ridgeon have lost all human feelings because they torture animals in order to experiment on them. She is friendly with doctors like B. B. and Walpole because they are kind to animals.

She thinks that Ridgeon made a dreadful mistake about Louis because he was making the same mistake about dogs. To him they were all dumb brutes and so he thought that Louis was only a clever brute.

Ridgeon says that he made no mistake about Louis. Jennifer says, "But he died". Ridgeon says that he is not dead : he lives in those pictures and that book. Saying that he touches the book. Jennifer bursts into a rage and shouts "Put that down. How dare you touch it ?" Then she controls herself and explains that it is a private copy.

Ridgeon asks her, "you know then that I killed him ?" This softens her and she tells him that if he acknowledges his mistake she can forgive him and become friends with him again.

Ridgeon says that he cannot be her friend on false pretences. The medicine that he has prepared is a dangerous one. In his hands it cures.. In the hands of a novice it kills. He killed Louis by letting B. B. use that medicine on him.

Jennifer asks him why he did so. Then he confesses that he did it because he was in love with her. She is surprised. He is 20 years older. How could this elder man be in love with her ? Now she realizes that Ridgeon deliberately murdered Louis. He confesses that he did. She asks him whether he is not afraid that she might kill him. He says that in that case she would at least remember him. She says that she would always remember him as a little man who tried to kill a great one. She is amazed that he tried to kill that "wonderful and beautiful

life" just because he grudged him a woman whom he could never have expected to care for him. Ridgeon replies that this lady kissed his hands and told him that her friendship lasted unto death. Jennifer replies that in exchange for that he had betrayed her. Ridgeon replies that he had saved her. He had saved her from a terrible discovery. He felt that he must tell her now that the man whom she regarded as "the King of Men" was "the most entire and perfect scoundrel, the most miraculously mean rascal, the most callously selfish blackguard that ever made a wife miserable".

All this does not shock Jennifer. She knew all this and yet loved Louis. Ridgeon was wrong in thinking that one day she would have made a terrible discovery. She calmly told Ridgeon that Louis had made her very happy. Ridgeon insisted that he had made his widow very happy. And he took the credit for making her a widow.

Jennifer says calmly that she is not angry with him. He did not understand why Louis was selfish. He sacrificed everything and everybody for his art. When Ridgeon points out that he did not sacrifice himself, Jennifer says that he knew that self-sacrifice is vain and cowardly.

Ridgeon now takes the Secretary's list and says that he has marked five pictures as sold to him. Jennifer says that they would not be sold to him. This is her birthday and they were bought for her that morning *by her husband.*

Ridgeon almost goes mad when he hears that she is already married. At first he does not believe this and asks her, "Do you mean to say that you have married again ?"

Jennifer reminds him that Louis disliked widows and always said that those who are happily married once always marry again.

Ridgeon can only say, "Then I have committed a purely disinterested murder ?" He had killed Louis in the hope that he would be able to marry his widow. But she had married someone else.

The Secretary returns with copies of the catalogue. Jennifer bids adieu to Ridgeon in a polite but formal way. She says, "So glad you like the pictures, Sir Colenso, Good morning".

Ridgeon goes towards the door, wants to come back and say something else but gives it up as a bad job and goes.

3
SOURCES OF THE PLAY

Shaw observed the lives and actions of the doctors and surgeons of his time and he came to the conclusion that the medical service, as provided in England in 1906, was "a murderous absurdity". The doctors were decent persons themselves but the conditions of society were such that they had to earn their living by exploiting the diseases of their fellow men. Most of them were poor and so instead of preventing diseases and curing them at the earliest, they prolonged diseases because they did not want to lose their patients. This was the main problem in Shaw's mind when he wrote *The Doctor's Dilemma.*

The play begins with the award of knighthood to Dr. Ridgeon for his great Opsonin discovery. This idea is taken by Shaw from the great discovery of Sir Almroth Wright. The theory of vaccination had been going on for a long time. It was believed, that a patient was made immune to a disease if a vaccine made of weak germs of the same disease was injected into the patient's body. When this inoculation is done the phagocytes or white blood corpuscles (which fight against the bacteria) become active and so when an attack of the strong bacteria of that disease comes the phagocytes eat up all those germs and so the person does not get that disease.

But it was found that the same inoculation had good effect on some patients and very bad effect on others.

Sir Almroth did research work on this in his famous laboratory in St. Mary's Hospital, London. He found that the phagocytes attack and eat up the disease germs only when the disease germs are buttered appetizingly for them with a natural sauce which Sir Almroth called Opsonin. Now, this Opsonin is produced by the human body. But Nature acts rhythmically. Sometimes it produces more Opsonin, sometimes less. When the human butter factory is on the up :grade it produces more

and more Opsonin. Then the factory is on the down grade and it produces less and less Opsonin.

Sir Almroth's discovery was that if the serum or anti-toxin is injected into a patient at a time when the patient's butter factory is on the up grade, the huge quantity of Opsonin in the system makes the disease germs very tasty for the phagocytes and so the germs are eaten up by the phagocytes and the patient gets a miraculous cure and gets immune to the disease. But if the same anti-toxin is injected at a time when the human body's capacity to produce Opsonin is at its lowest point, the phagocytes will not eat the disease germs and the patient will get a stronger attack of the disease. Sir Almroth invented a technique for finding out in which phase the patient happened to be at a particular time.

This is what Shaw represents in this play in the form of the great discovery of Ridgeon which, he claims, is the greatest discovery made since Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood. By testing the blood of a patient he could find out in 15 minutes his Opsonin Index. If the Index is one it means that his butter factory is on the up grade or in the positive phase. If the anti-toxin is injected at this time the patient would have a wonderful cure. If, on the other hand. the Opsonin Index is under point eight and you inject the serum, you kill the patient.

Shaw shows in this play that this is Ridgeon's discovery, and it is shown in action. Blenkinsop is inoculated at the correct time and is cured. Louis Dubedat is inoculated at the wrong time by B. B. and it aggravates the disease to such an extent that he dies in three days.

The main idea of the play was suggested to Shaw by a visit to Sir Almroth Wright at St. Mary's Hospital. An assistant came to report that a new T.B. patient wanted to be admitted to his ward to be treated by Sir Almroth by his new Opsonin method. The ward was overcrowded and there was no room for an additional patient. Sir Almroth asked "Is he worth it ?" This gave Shaw the idea that a play could be written on this dilemma.

In this play Ridgeon is faced with this dilemma. He could take only one patient. Should he take Dubedat who was a talented artist but an immoral man or Blenkinsop who was a decent man but had no talent ? He had to decide which of the two was more worth saving.

The character of Dubedat was drawn by Shaw partly from a person called Aveling whom he knew well. Aveling was atheist and a Marxist. He was firm in his beliefs and he never surrendered his convictions. But he borrowed money and never returned it; he deceived people and he seduced women freely. He was good in giving science lessons ; and for these he used to take his fee in advance. But he never gave the lessons. The girl students who had paid him money in advance either got letters of apology or were seduced.

In this play Dubedat is a great artist and a very talented man. But he does not paint the pictures for which he has already taken an advance; he borrows money from everyone; and he marries a poor girl, Minnie Tinwell, although he is already married to Jennifer, spends all her money in three weeks and then abandons her. But like Aveling Dubedat dies a glorious death like an atheist saint.

When Dubedat was dying he expressed his artistic faith in very beautiful words. He said, "I believe in Michael Angelo, Valasquez and Rembrandt, in the might of design, the mystery of colour, the redemption of all things by Beauty everlasting, and the message of Art that has made these hands blessed. Amen, Amen." Shaw revealed that he had taken these words from Wagner's story *End of a Musician in Paris*, in which the dying musician begins his creed with the words, "I believe in God, Mozart, Beethoven......" Shaw only left out God from Dubedat's speech because Dubedat did not believe in God, and introduced the names of great painters.

Henderson, Shaw's biographer, has described how *The Doctor's Dilemma* began. Granville Barker visited Shaw in the summer of 1906 at Mevagissey on the sea-coast of Cornwall. Barker remarked that the doctors were preserving the lives of many patients who were useless and did not deserve to live. At this Mrs. Shaw exclaimed that "there was a play in that". Shaw replied, "Sure enough, I believe you are right. Hand me my tablet and I will go to work on it at once." This was the genesis of *The Doctor's Dilemma*.

30

4

THE DILEMMA

What is a dilemma ?

A dilemma is a situation in which an awkward choice has to be made by a person between two conflicting courses of action. There is something wrong in each choice and so the choice is very difficult.

What is the Doctor's Dilemma in this play ?

The doctor who faces the dilemma in this play is Dr. Colenso Ridgeon. He has discovered a method of treating tuberculosis which succeeds in curing most of the patients. He has chosen ten men for treatment after making sure that they were worth saving. The facilities in the hospital are so limited that he cannot take any more patients. At the most he can squeeze in one patient. Two persons request him earnestly to undertake their treatment. One is a very talented artist but he is a rogue in the affairs of money and women. The other person has no talent but he is a good and honest man. The dilemma is beautifully summed up by A. C. Ward thus : "The basic problem in *The Doctor's Dilemma* is : who is the more valuable, a good man who has no genius or a man of genius who has no other goodness ?"

How does the dilemma arise ?

The dilemma arises only towards the end of the Second Act in this play.

The play begins with the announcement of the award of a knighthood to Ridgeon for his great discovery of a cure for tuberculosis. All the eminent doctors come to congratulate him. Mrs. Jennifer Dubedat, whose husband is suffering from T. B. reads in the papers about Ridgeon's discovery and comes to him to request him to cure her husband. The doctors are busy talking about their theories and so Ridgeon tells the maid-servant to tell her that he cannot see her. But she persists and even bribes Emmy. Finally Ridgeon agrees to see her for a few minutes

Ridgeon is fifty years old but he is highly susceptible to the beauty of young women. He is charmed by Jennifer and allows her to stay on. But he tells her that his hands are full and he canont take another case. She pleads that Dubedat is a very talented artist and deserves to be saved. Ridgeon is highly impressed by the paintings, specially the sketches of Jennifer. He invites her and her husband to a dinner that he is giving in honour of his knighthood where all the eminent doctors would be present. They can all see him and decide whether he is worth saving. Jennifer is very happy.

So far there is no dilemma. The only question is whether Dubedat is worth saving.

At the dinner everyone is impressed by the couple. Ridgeon is in love with Jennifer. Louis Dubedat impresses everyone by his self-confidence and his artistic talent. He draws beautiful sketches of the doctors on the menu cards. Ridgeon decides to undertake his treatment. When Dubedat coughs, Ridgeon tells his wife, "Never fear. Never mind. I'll make that cough all right".

So far there is no dilemma and Ridgeon has decided to take Louis under his treatment.

After the couple has left the doctors compare notes and find that Dubedat has tried to borrow money from all the doctors. Minnie Tinwell tells them that Dubedat had seduced her and married her and when her money was spent he had deserted her. He had done this although he was already married to Jennifer.

Then Blenkinsop tells them that he is suffering from T. B. and he appeals to Ridgeon to save his life.

Now a dilemma arises before Ridgeon. Sir Patrick asks him, "Well, Mr. Saviour of Lives ; which is it to be ? that honest decent man Blenkinsop, or that blackguard of an artist, eh ?" The dilemma arises because he can take only one patient out of the two claimants. The question that he has to decide is : who is more worth saving—a talented man who has no goodness or a good man who has no talent ?

How is the dilemma resolved ?

At first Ridgeon is inclined to favour Dubedat. Blenkinsop is an honest man but is he of any use ? Dubedat is a rotten blackguard; but he is a genuine source of pretty and pleasant and good things. Sir Patrick says that the choice is between a good

man and a lot of pictures. Another point that Sir Patrick raises is that if Dubedat lives on, his wife will find out what an immoral creature he is and then her life will become hell. Ridgeon is afraid that if he lets Dubedat die people might say that he did it because he wanted to marry his widow. Sir Patrick suggests that he can kill him not directly but by leaving him in B. B.'s hands. That will be the surest way of killing him. But Sir Patrick warns him that he must hold the scales even between Blenkinsop and Dubedat. His love for Jennifer should not influence his decision.

When he met Louis Dubedat in his studio in the III Act and talked to the other doctors he decided that Dubedat was an extremely vicious man and did not deserve to be saved. His dilemma is over.

Was the dilemma resolved in a straight way ?

On this point the critics are divided. We give below both the views :

First view :

The view of these critics is that Ridgeon resolved the dilemma in a straight way. He decided to take up Blenkinsop's case because he was a good man and Dubedat was a vicious fellow. The beautiful woman, Jennifer, did not influence his decision at all. He had fallen in love with her at their first meeting. If he wanted to marry her after her husband's death he could have told her plainly that he could not take up his case and he could have started his courtship after her husband's death. But he invites both of them to dinner. Now he is deeply in love with Jennifer and if he wanted to kill him in order to marry his widow he could have told them at this stage that he could not take up his case. Instead of that, when he finds him coughing he says, "Never fear. Never mind. I'll make that cough all right". And after the departure of the couple he says, "There is no mistake about his being a genius. It is something to have got a case really worth saving."

It is only when Dubedat's weaknesses regarding money and women come to light and Blenkinsop appeals to him to cure him that he is in a dilemma. When he meets Louis in his Studio and finds that he is ready to blackmail his own wife in order to get money and when he hears that he has pawned Walpole's golden cigarette case, he is confirmed in his view that Dubedat

does not deserve to live. So he gives his decision : "I will not lift a finger to save that reptile."

When he meets Jennifer in the studio alone he comes to know about her idealism. If her husband lives she would one day come to know that he is a blackguard and this knowledge would almost kill her. So the best way to preserve her hero was to kill him. So he feels that he has taken the correct decision.

He kills Louis Dubedat because he knows all his vices and feels that such a man is not fit to live. The dilemma is resolved. The good man is to be saved and the genius who is not a good man has to die.

Second view :

Other critics feel that Shaw has confused the dilemma by introducing the beautiful woman, Jennifer, and showing Ridgeon in love with her. Ridgeon does not kill Louis Dubedat because he is a bad man but because he wants to marry his widow. The real dilemma that Ridgeon faces is whether he should save the great artist and suppress his love for Jennifer or kill him and marry his widow. Blenkinsop does not come into the picture at all.

This view seems to be correct because when Ridgeon finds that after Louis Dubedat's death he is unable to marry Jennifer he says, "Then I have committed a purely disinterested murder." That is a confession that he murdered Dubedat in order to marry his widow. When he finds that she has married someone else, he says that in that case he killed Dubedat for nothing. This proves that he killed Dubedat not because he was a bad man but because he himself was in love with Jennifer and wanted to marry her when her husband was dead.

Tragedy for the Doctor

Whatever view we accept, the fact is that Dr. Ridgeon's conduct was wrong. A doctor must not refuse to treat a patient just because he is a bad man. And it is highly immoral of him as a doctor to kill a patient so that he can marry his widow. At the end of the play he gets his just punishment when he is virtually kicked out by the woman whom he loves and wants to marry. The play ends as a tragedy for Dr. Ridgeon.

5

THE PLOT

Shaw's purpose in writing plays was not to write good stories. His purpose was to convey his ideas to the public. He paid no attention to the building up of plots. In fact he called plots "the deadliest of dead wood".

So most of Shaw's plays do not have unified plots. He only presents a series of startling episodes which serve as pegs to hold his ideas.

The episodes in this play

The Doctor's Dilemma does not have a unified plot. His aim in writing this play was to show the whims and follies of doctors and to make out a case for the socialization of the medical profession. This is contained in the I Act which takes about one hour on the stage. This has only a slender connection with the other episodes of the play.

There are four episodes in this play :

1. The whims and follies of doctors.
2. Ridgeon's Dilemma.
3. The immoral life but glorious death of Louis Dubedat.
4. Ridgeon's courtship of Jennifer and its sequel.

Ridgeon is the connecting link in these episodes.

1. The Whims and follies of doctors

Dr. Ridgeon has made a great discovery of a new method of curing tuberculosis. His friends, who are all leaders of the profession, come to congratulate him. This gives Shaw an opportunity to discuss the various aspects of the medical profession.

From the conversation among the doctors we come to know that the doctors are all blunderers. An opera singer had a growth in her vocal chords. She is sent to Walpole who is a famous surgeon. He does not touch the growth but removes her Nuciform sac. In another case, after the operation was over he

was about to stitch the wound when the nurse pointed out that he had left the sponges inside. The great physician, B. B. treated a case of typhoid with a powerful serum prepared to combat T.B.

He shows that each doctor has his own mania. Ridgeon's theory is that T. B. can be cured by stimulating the phagocytes at the right time. Schutzmacher treats all diseases with Parrish's Chemical Food and Blenkinsop with a pound of ripe greengages (to be taken everyday half an hour before lunch). Walpole thinks that all diseases are caused by blood poisoning and can be cured by removing the Nuciform Sac.

Poor doctors are dangerous because they perform unnecessary operations and prolong diseases in order to make money. Doctors in general have a vested interest in the ill-health of the community.

They waste their time in social talk while patients are waiting to consult them.

Thus Shaw shows that what should have been a brotherhood of benefactors dedicated to relieve the sufferings of mankind has become a conspiracy of quacks to fleece the public.

But these things are forgotten in the rest of the play. How can we say that Ridgeon is a blunderer when his treatment cures Blenkinsop completely? In the First Act Shaw has said that a poor doctor is dangerous. But Blenkinsop turns out to be a most honest and harmless creature.

There are only two things said in the First Act which are illustrated in the play:

(1) To hand over a case to B.B. is the best way to murder him.

(2) Sir Patrick Cullen says that Ridgeon is going to make a fool of himself. The rest of the play shows how he makes a fool of himself.

Jennifer is introduced in the First Act not to introduce us to the dilemma but only to show us her beauty and how she attracts Ridgeon.

2. The Doctor's Dilemma

This episode shows us the difficult choice faced by Dr. Ridgeon. His hospital is crowded and he can at the most take one patient. There are two claimants for this one seat. One is a talented artist but he is unreliable in matters of money and

women. The other has no talent but is an honest and sincere man. But Ridgeon does not make a straightforward choice. His decision is influenced by his love for the artist's wife.

The good man here is Dr. Blenkinsop. But the good man need not have been a doctor. He might have been a teacher or a bank clerk.

If Shaw's idea was to make this dilemma the central theme of the play, then the detailed discussion of the demerits of the medical profession is irrelevant.

3. Louis Dubedat

Louis Dubedat dominates the Second, Third and Fourth Acts. He is a genius in painting but he is a beggar and a bigamist. He is not ashamed of his immoral actions because he does not believe in conventional morality. He knows that he is dying but he is not afraid of death. He does not believe in religion. Art is his religion and he dies bravely with his artistic creed on his lips. His glorious death is a fine episode in the play.

The aggravation of Dubedat's illness and his quick death only illustrate one thing, namely that the eminent physician B. B. is a blunderer.

4. Ridgeon's courtship and its sequel

Ridgeon meets Jennifer towards the end of the First Act. He is about fifty years old but he is a bachelor. He is charmed by the beauty of this young lady and falls in love with her. To serve his lady-love he agrees to treat her artist husband who is suffering from T.B. Then he comes to know that the husband, Louis Dubedat, has no morals. He has terrible weaknesses where money and women are concerned. His old class-fellow, Dr. Blenkinsop who is also suffering from T.B., appeals to him to cure him. Now there is a dilemma before him. Should he save the genius who is an immoral man or a morally upright man who is not a genius ? More instances of Dubedat's bad behaviour come to light. He asks Ridgeon for money and wants him to get it back by blackmailing his own wife, Jennifer. This is too much for Ridgeon. He cannot save this viper. He knows that B. B., though he talks of science and phagocytes, does not understand his manner of treatment at all. To hand over a case to this blunderer is the surest way of killing the patinent. Then the idea comes to him that he can get Louis killed by handing him over to B. B. And then he can marry Jennifer whom he loves.

He thinks that he is acting in Jennifer's interests, because when she finds out what a blackguard her husband is, her life will become hell. So he gets Louis killed.

But when he meets Jennifer after Louis's death he finds out his mistake. He had completely misunderstood her. She knew her husband's weaknesses and yet regarded him as a king of men. His glorious death had made him almost a god for her.

When he tells her that he was instrumental in killing her husband because of his love for her, she does not believe him. How could he, an elderly man, think of marrying a lady twenty years younger to him? She has nothing but contempt for him. He was a little man who had tried to kill a great one. And all his hopes and wishes are dashed to the ground when he hears that she has already married someone else. Ridgeon is really a pathetic figure when he is unceremoniously dismissed by Jennifer from the picture gallery.

Is there Unity in the play ?

Most of the critics feel that there is no unity in the play. They feel that Ridgeon would have resolved the dilemma on merits if the beautiful woman Jennifer had not come into the picture. She has spoiled the unity of the play.

Other critics feel that it is Jennifer who has given unity to the play. They say that the theme of the play is Ridgeon's courtship of Jennifer, the dilemma arising from it and the Sequel which proves to be most tragic for Ridgeon. According to them, the play should be looked upon as the love story of a doctor, with some satire on the medical profession thrown into it.

6
THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA AS A PROBLEM PLAY

A Problem Play or a Drama of Ideas is a play in which a problem is discussed in all its aspects In *The Doctor's Dilemma* he discusses the problems of the medical profession as it existed in the first decade of this century and also the problem which a particular doctor faced in the course of his medical treatment. The characters and situations are so designed as to give full scope for the discussion of these problems.

The play begins with the conferment of knighthood on Dr. Colenso Ridgeon. This is the dramatist's trick to bring all the leaders of the profession together and to make them talk about their problems and failings.

Wastage of time

The first thing which we notice is that the doctors waste their time talking to each other while their patients are waiting. Dr. Ridgeon's maid-servant, Emmy, says. "I know what doctors are : sitting talking together about themselves when they ought to be with their poor patients." They can talk to each other for one hour but they have no time to see a patient.

Doctor's theories

The next thing we notice about the eminent doctors is that they do not agree with each other. Each one has a pet theory of his own. Dr. Ridgeon has discovered a new treatment for tuberculosis. The phagocytes in the blood eat the disease germs. But they eat the germs only when they are buttered with Opsonin Now, the human body sometimes produces more of opsonin, sometimes less. The anti-toxin is to be injected in the patient at a time when his body is producing a lot of opsonin. If the injection is given at a time when his body is producing less opson-in he will be killed.

No other doctor believes in this theory. Sir Patrick Cullen thinks that this is nothing but old vaccination in a new form.

Walpole calls it "simple rot." Walpole is a good surgeon and his theory is that all diseases are caused by blood poisoning. He has one panacea for all ills. Whether the patient has trouble with his vocal chords or with his lungs, the one remedy is to remove his Nuciform Sac. The other doctors do not agree. B. B. says, "It is simple fraud. There is no such thing as a Nuciform Sac."

Ignorant blunderers

B. B. has a fashionable practice and he is a court physician but he is a blunderer. His idea is that all diseases can be cured by stimulating the phagocytes of the patient. For this purpose any anti-toxin is good enough. Thus he takes Ridgeon's anti-toxin which has been prepared to combat T.B. and injects it in Prince Charles who is suffering from simple fever. He blunders into success and the prince is cured. So he becomes certain that any anti-toxin can cure all diseases. He is a colossal humbug. Dr. Blenkinsop has not touched a medical book since he passed out of the medical college thirty years ago. His patients are too poor to purchase medicines. So whatever be the disease, he asks the patient to eat greengages. And Dr. Schutzmacher has a universal remedy for all diseases : Parrish's Chemical Food. Shaw thus shows that all these doctors are ignorant blunderers.

B. B. undertakes the treatment of Louis Dubedat who is suffering from T.B. He understands nothing about Ridgeon's discovery and he injects Ridgeon's powerful anti-toxins into Louis without checking his Opsonin index. The result is that the disease which in normal course would have killed him in three months, kills him in three days. Ridgeon very rightly says about the medical profession : "We are not a profession. We are a conspiracy."

Doctors are callous

Another aspect of the medical profession which Shaw brings out is that doctors become indifferent to human feelings and sufferings. B.B. has virtually killed Louis Dubedat because of his blunders but he finds the case very "interesting" and wants to write a paper on it. And just after the artist's death Walpole cracks a joke at his cost. When Sir Patrick says, "He is in another world now", Walpole says, "Borrowing his first five-pound note there, probably". Shaw's idea is that doctors dissect animals for their research work and so become callous to human suffering as well.

They thrive on diseases

The blunders of individual doctors make Shaw laugh. But what annoys him is that doctors thrive on diseases. They are not interested in preventing diseases. If everyone is healthy they would starve. An epidemic would make them rich. A poor doctor is dangerous because in order to earn money he prolongs diseases. And surgeons perform unnecessary operations in order to earn money.

But is it the fault of doctors ? Shaw would say "most certainly not". The doctors in this play are all good persons. The fault is that of society. It is the duty of the state to pay the doctors to prevent diseases and to cure the diseases if they appear. What he wants is that Harley Street (which is the centre of eminent doctors) should be municipalised. The state should reward the doctors if there are fewer diseases. The doctors should live on money provided by society and not on the diseases of their patients.

Thus in this play Shaw criticises the medical profession and also offers suggestions for its improvement.

The Dilemma

Shaw also presents in this play a problem faced by one of the doctors. He has found a new cure for tuberculosis, but he wants to cure only those persons who deserve to be saved. The hospital is full and with great difficulty he can admit only one more patient. Two persons approach him. One is a talented artist but an immoral man in personal life and the other is a good man but he has no talent. Dr. Ridgeon has to decide which one out of these two he should save. He is on the horns of a dilemma.

The dilemma is, however, resolved not on moral but on personal grounds. Ridgeon decides to sacrifice the immoral artist not because he is immoral but because he has a beautiful wife whom the doctor wishes to marry after her husband's death.

Problem Play with a difference

Thus The Doctor's Dilemma is a Problem Play but it is not the usual type of problem play. In the hands of inferior dramatists dull discussion dominates a problem play and the human interest is lost. In the case of a play of this type when the problem ceases to be of interest, the play also loses all interest.

This does not happen in *The Doctor's Dilemma.* Some discussion is there but it does not dominate the action. The problems of the medical profession are discussed in great detail in the Preface and only touched upon in the play. The main interest is centred in the doctors as human beings and in their patients whom they sometimes cure with their skill and sometimes kill due to their blunders. It is not a mere debate-drama. It is a work of art.

Though the problems which are discussed in the play have ceased to interest us, the play is even now enjoyed on the stage as well as in the study because of its immortal characters, its human situations and its wit and humour.

7
THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA AS A REALISTIC PLAY

The Doctor's Dilemma is a realistic social play. The situation is taken from real life. The doctors are very realistically presented. He shows that so long as society does not take up the responsibility of paying doctors to prevent diseases and to cure them when they occur, the medical service will remain "a murderous absurdity".

Drama of real life

Shaw's purpose in writing plays was to convey his ideas. He wanted to present the various problems of society in his plays. But the defect of Problem Plays is that they do not last. When the problem ceases to be of interest to the people the play also loses its interest.

But in *The Doctor's Dilemma* Shaw has avoided this defect. He has written a long Preface discussing in detail the various problems of the medical profession and a comparatively short play dealing with a realistic situation and presenting life-like characters. The Preface deals with the problems as they existed in 1911. Most of his suggestions have been accepted and have been incorporated in the British Health Scheme. The Preface has, therefore, become out-of-date and does not interest us any longer. But the play is based on situations which are of perennial interest and presents doctors who seem to be taken from real life. The play, therefore, continues to interest audiences and readers.

Realistic Situations

Shaw said that in Shakespeare the psychology of the characters is realistic but the situations are not realistic. For instance, in *Hamlet* the hero's uncle murders his father and marries his mother. In *King Lear* the king distributes his kingdom among his daughters. In *Macbeth* the ambitious hero, who is misled

by the witches, murders the king and becomes the king himself. Such situations do not happen in real modern life.

The situations in *The Doctor's Dilemma* are true to life. The dilemma that faces Ridgeon is this : who is better, a genius who is a scoundrel in matters of money and women or a morally upright man who has no genius ? This problem has baffled mankind for ages. Are we to judge everyone by conventional morality ? Or should we condone the moral lapses of a man just because he can paint great pictures ? If we have a lot of people among us who are great poets and painters but who do not adhere to any moral law, life would become difficult for us. On the other hand, if the people are all morally upright but there is no great painter or poet or sculptor among them, people will be starved intellectually and spiritually.

Another problem is this : Is Louis Dubedat who borrows money without any intention of returning it and who marries a girl while he is already married, a greater criminal or Ridgeon who kills a patient just because he wants to marry his pretty widow ?

Another situation in the play is about the behaviour of a romantic lover towards his lady-love. Dr. Ridgeon falls in love with Jennifer when she comes to request him to cure her husband. What is he to do ? At first he wants to serve her by curing her husband. But then he discovers that her husband is a reptile who deserves to be killed. He also finds that she regards her husband as a sort of god. He thinks that when she finds out that he is really a blackguard she would be almost killed. He can keep up her illusion only by killing him. So he tells her that her *hero* will be preserved if her husband is treated by B. B. who is a blunderer. When she offers her friendship to him he thinks that she is in love with him and will definitely marry him after her husband is dead. So he gets her husband killed. But when he goes to her to get his reward he finds that she had never even thought of him as a possible lover and she has already married another man and has nothing but contempt for him. He got no benefit from his act of killing the husband of his lady-love. It has been a purely "disinterested murder". The lover's disappointment at the end is very natural.

Actions of doctors

The actions of doctors are also true to life. Even now doctors spend their time in social talk while their patients are waiting.

Modern Walpoles do not remove the Nuciform sac : they remove the tonsil or the appendix. Even now doctors prosper if diseases multiply. Doctors even now make money by prolonging the diseases of their rich patients. Most of the doctors do not have any interest in preserving the health of the public. They live on the ill-health of the public.

Shaw does not caricature the doctors. All the doctors seem to be taken from life. They have their whims and fads but none of them is an evil creature. The conversation of the doctors in the First Act is absolutely life-like and keeps up our interest on the stage for nearly one hour. We are made to feel that the absurdities of the medical profession are not due to doctors. They are doing their best. It is society that is responsible for all the faults of doctors. The state should pay doctors to prevent diseases and to cure the patients. They should not be left to earn money from the diseases of their fellow men.

Some people say that the doctors in this play are heartless. They refer to the remarks of the doctors at the time of Dubedat's death. B. B., whose blunder has caused his death, calls it "an interesting case" and he wants to write a paper on it. And when Sir Patrick says, "He is in another world now, "Walpole says, "Borrowing his first five-pound note there, probably."

It is true that doctors get used to deaths because therh are so many patients dying everyday. But in personal life, Jennifer tells us later, B. B. and Walpole were very kind-hearted persons and could not stand any cruelty even to animals.

Two flaws

There are, however, two flaws in the realism of the play. One is the character of Louis Dubedat. He does not seem to be a convincing character. There is nothing except Shaw's statement to convince us that he is a great artist. If he was really a genius he could have sold his pictures at a high price and there would have been no need for him to borrow money. But he does not want to paint the pictures even for those from whom he has taken advances. Of course, he makes fine sketches of the doctors. But he does not seem to be a genius. He is a thorough-going rascal. He is clever enough to cast a fine impression on his wife at the time of his death. But that is only a pose. It seems that his art is also a pose. He is only a "clever brute".

Shaw would have replied that he was drawn on the pattern of his friend, Aveling. But he does not appear to be a living being to us.

The other flaw is the caricature of the Newspaper Man. Correspondents of newspapers are sometimes ignorant and they mis-report events. They take delight in describing tragedies. But no correspondent in the world could be so ignorant and cruel as the one presented by Shaw in this play. No human being would ask a woman whose husband has just died to describe how it feels like to be a widow. The Newspaper Man does not appear to be a real human being at all.

But on the whole, the play is very realistic. The situations are realistic and the doctors seem to be taken from real life.

8

SHAW'S PRESENTATION OF DEATH

Shaw's practice

Shaw believed that a horrible action like a death or murder should not be shown on the stage. A play should only consist of dialogue and discussion. If any impression of an action is to be given, it should be included in Stage Directions. In this respect Shaw differed fram Shakespeare and other romatic dramatists who showed all actions on the stage.

Shaw was a great admirer of Ibsen but he found that Ibsen also showed horrible actions on the stage.

After Ibsen's death Shaw wrote a critical appreciation of his work in June, 1906, in which he criticised Ibsen for showing death on the stage. He said, "Ibsen seems to have succumbed without a struggle to the old notion that a play is not really a play unless it contains a murder, a suicide, or something else out of the Police Gazette".

Archer's challenge

Shaw's friend, William Archer, strongly defended Ibsen and said that Shaw's criticism of Ibsen's presentation of death reminded him of the story of the fox without the tail. Shaw could not show death on the stage because he was "at the mercy of this impish sense of humour". Archer said, "If, in Mr. Shaw's own phrase, 'the illumination of life' is the main purpose of drama, what illuminant, we may ask, can be more powerful than death ?......It is not the glory but the limitation of Mr. Shaw's theatre that it is peopled by immortals." Archer said that Shaw could not claim the highest rank as a dramatist until he had faced the King of Terrors on the stage.

Shaw's response

Soon after this it was announced in *The Tribune* that "stung by this reproach from his old friend, Mr. Shaw is writing a play all about Death, which, he declares will be the most amusing

play he has ever written." This was *The Doctor's Dilemma* in which he showed the death of Louis Dubedat on the stage.

In a play dealing with doctors the death of a patient appears to be very natural, specially because doctors are spoken of as "licensed murderers." But Shaw does not present death as a writer of tragedies would present it. He gives a special Shavian twist to it.

Louis Dubedat is not a heroic figure. He is a good artist but in personal life he is a bigamist and a blackguard. His death cannot, therefore, arouse the type of tragic emotions which are aroused by the death of an Othello or a Faustus.

Splendid Death

Louis Dubedat dies a splendid death. He might have been a sinner all his life but he dies like a saint. He dies as a young man but the King of Terrors cannot terrify him. He is not afraid of man's enemy. He does not believe in God and no clergyman has assured him that he will go to heaven but he is perfectly at peace. It might have been only a pose but it touches us deeply.

The words of Dubedat as he lies dying in his studio are highly emotional and poetic. He asks his wife not to mourn for him. She should put on fine clothes and jewels and look beautiful. She should marry again and be happy. She would be his immortality.

In his dealings with the world he has broken the laws of conventional morality but in his world of art he has done nothing wrong. He says, "I know that in an accidental sort of way, struggling through the unreal part of life, I have not always been able to live up to my ideal. But in my own real world I have never done anything wrong, never denied my faith, never been untrue to myself. I have been threatened and blackmailed and insulted and starved. But I have played the game. I have fought the good fight. And now it's all over, there is an indescribable peace." Then holding his hands he utters his artistic creed : "I believe in Michael Angelo, Velasquez, and Rembrandt; in the might of design, the mystery of colour, the redemption of all things by Beauty everlasting, and the message of Art that has made these hands blessed. Amen. Amen."

This is death seen from the point of view of a man whose entire life and religion consist of his art.

Death from different points of view

In this play Shaw shows death simultaneously from different points of view. Louis Dubedat uses his last moments of life to stamp a glorious image of himself on the onlookers. The artist sees in death an opportunity to paint his last picture on his wife's mind. It is the picture of a great genius and a great lover who wanted to make his wife supremely happy even after his death.

A sentimental person like B. B. is tremendously moved by death. He knows that Louis was a rascal but he says, "The poor lad! He died splendidly". He is reminded of Shakespeare's poetic words about death.

The other doctors remain indifferent. They see people dying everyday and so they are not moved. Walpole cracks a joke at his cost and Ridgeon says, "Let us *get this thing* out of the way before she comes".

The Newspaper Man is supremely callous. He finds in the death an opportunity to earn some money by writing about it in his paper. When he is told that the artist may die any moment, he says, "I am in luck today". After Louis Dubedat's death he wants to ask Jennifer how it feels like to be a widow, Callousness could not go farther than this!

Sir Patrick represents the point of view of realistic common sense. He knows that Louis was wicked but he says, "It is not for us to judge. He is in another world now". And he adds, "It matters very little how a man dies. What matters is how he lives".

For Jennifer it is a supremely tragic event. She has always regarded her husband as a god. She feels that the sight of this great man's death has made all of them greater and nobler. She says, "We have shared together a great privilege and a great happiness. I don't think we can ever think of ourselves as ordinary people again. We have had a wonderful experience; and that gives us a common faith, a common ideal, that nobody else can quite have. Life will always be beautiful to us: death will always be beautiful to us. May we shake hands on that?"

Humour

But a scene of death in Shaw did not mean that people should be horrified and should scream in terror. Ridgeon presents his point of view when he says, "Life does not cease to be funny when people die any more than it ceases to be serious when

people laugh". The joker in Shaw bursts out as soon as Dubedat had died. When Sir Patrick says, "He is in another world now", Walpole says, "Borrowing his first fivepound note there, probably".

The solemnity is completely spoiled.

Archer naturally complained that Shaw had not met his challenge by treating death "soberly, seriously, naturally, or, in a word, with a straight face". But Archer should have known that he was approaching the wrong man to write a scene depicting death. How could a comic artist like Shaw create the sense of terror and awe which is expected in a great tragedy ?

But in this scene, while Shaw has not risen to the heights of tragedy, he has certainly risen to the heights of poetry and emotion and has succeded in presenting death from different points of view.

9

STAGE DIRECTIONS IN THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA

We have already discussed Shaw's practice of writing detailed Stage Directions in the General Introduction, Section 12, (p. 70). Here we shall discuss the Stage Directions as given in *The Doctor's Dilemma*.

The Setting

The first purpose of the Stage Directions is to describe the proper setting of each Act or scene. This is a great help to the Stage Manager, the Carpenter and the Decorator when the play is to be put up on the stage.

Shakespeare and the other earlier dramatists did not give any Stage Directions. In those days there was no proper stage and no stage machinery. So the dramatists had to describe the setting of the scene in the dialogue itself. Now, the Stage Manager knows what type of setting is required for that scene and he arranges the stage accordingly. With the resources placed at their disposal by Science they can create the type of atmosphere required by the dramatist. The result is that as soon as the curtain rises the audience knows the type of place where the action is to take place and the type of people who live there. Their profession, their taste, their psychology and even their financial position can be be judged even before they have spoken a single word.

For instance, when the curtain rises in the I Act of *The Doctor's Dilemma* we at once realize that this is the consulting room of a doctor who is interested in research on germs, because there is a microscope and several test-tubes there. We also know that he is old-fashioned in his taste because the furniture is of the 19th Century style. When the curtain rises in the III Act we can at once see that it is a poor artist's studio. He has made sketches even on the walls. There is an easel and bottles and jars of oil, paint-smudged rags and drawing blocks and sketch

books. The Stage Manager knows what the playwright wants and he arranges that there is no need for the dramatist to describe these things in the dialogue.

Characters

When a character is introduced he is described in detail in the Stage Directions. His past history and background, his work and way of behaviour, his whims and fancies, are all described in detail. This helps the Producer, the Director and the actor who is taking that part, to get the author's idea of what the character is like and how he is to be presented on the stage. Thus Redpenny is a medical student who acts as a domestic laboratory assistant of Dr. Ridgeon and does odd jobs for him. He is "wide-open-eyed, ready, credulous, friendly, hasty youth, with his hair and clothes in reluctant transition from the untidy boy to the tidy doctor."

The stage direction of Sir Patrick Cullen states that he is more than twenty years older than Ridgeon. He is a man of large build and stature. He is a man of common sense. "His manner to Ridgeon, whom he likes, is whimsical and fatherly; to others he is a little gruff and uninviting, apt to substitute more or less expressive grunts for articulate speech." This will guide the actor who takes this part to act this part properly.

Wit and humour

Most of the Stage Directions in *The Doctor's Dilemma* are full of wit and humour. See the following description of Emmy, Ridgeon's old serving-woman :

"She has never known the cares, the preoccupations, the responsibilities, jealousies and anxieties of personal beauty. She has the complexion of a never washed gypsy, incurable by any detergents; and she has, not a regular beard and moustaches, which could at least be trimmed and waxed into a masculine presentableness, but a whole crop of small-beards and moustaches, mostly springing from moles all over her face......She has used her ugliness to secure indulgences unattainable by Cleopatra or Fair Rosamund, and has the further great advantage over them that age increases her qualification instead of impairing it. Being an industrious, agreeable, and popular old soul, she is a walking sermon on the vanity of feminine prettiness."

Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonington is described thus :

"He is a tall man, with a head like a tall and slender egg... His fair eyebrows arch goodnaturedly and uncritically. He has

a most musical voice; his speech is a perpetual anthem; and he never tires of it. He radiates an enormous self-satisfaction, cheering, reassuring, healing by the mere incompatibility of disease or anxiety with his welcome presence. Even broken bones, it is said, have been known to unite at the sound of his voice; he is a born healer, as independent of mere treatment and skill as any Christian scientist."

The description of the Newspaper Man is a masterpiece of vigorous prose. He is "a cheerful, affable young man who is disabled for ordinary business pursuits by a congenital erroneousness which renders him incapable of describing accurately anything he sees, or understanding or reporting accurately anything he hears. As the only employment in which these defects do not matter, is journalism (for a newspaper, not having to act on its descriptions and reports, but only to sell them to idly curious people, has nothing but honour to lose by inaccuracy and unveracity), he has perforce become a journalist, and has to keep up an air of high spirits through a daily struggle with his own illiteracy and the precariousness of his employment."

Impossible to act

But while the Stage Directions are supposed to be *Directions for the stage*, most of Shaw's Directions cannot be put on the stage. How can a Stage Manager, in spite of all the resources of modern technology, show "a cloudless summer night", "the long trajectory of a distant train" and "the measured clucking of oars coming up from the Thames in the valley below" ? How can an actor, however talented he might be, show that "the lines in his face are those of overwork and restless scepticism, perhaps partly of curiosity and appetite, rather than that of age" ?

Meant for readers

The fact is that most of the stage directions are meant for the readers of the play. The very first line of the first stage direction of the play tells us that it was the 15th of June, 1903. It is meant to tell the readers that the play depicts the condition of the medical profession as it existed in the year 1903. Most of the things said about Emmy or the doctors or the Newspaper Man cannot be put on the stage.

In his Stage Directions Shaw has borrowed the art of the novelist. His psychological analysis of character can only be appreciated by a reader. When we are told that Ridgeon is a

bachelor and he is "a man of fifty who has never shaken off his youth", we are mentally prepared for his romance with young Jennifer. A person who sees the play only on the stage misses all the beautiful descriptions given in the Stage Directions. A reader of this play can form a vivid picture of the background of the action and the psychology of the characters. The elaborate Stage Directions are meant not so much for the producers and Directors as for the readers of the play.

Because of the Stage Directions, *The Doctor's Dilemma* can be enjoyed as much in the Study as on the Stage.

10

ART AND PROPAGANDA IN THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA

Shaw did not believe in Art for Art's sake. Art, according to him, must be used for a didactic purpose. Art must teach something or expose some evil. In *The Doctor's Dilemma* art is used to expose the evils of the medical profession.

Shaw wrote his plays only to convey his ideas to his audiences and his readers. Thus his plays became problem plays in which the problems are discussed in the form of dialogue between different characters. In the hands of inferior dramatists problem plays became only serious and somewhat dull propaganda. But Shaw combines art with propaganda. Thus the artist and the propagandist were both at work in the writing of *The Doctor's Dilemma*. Here he wrote a long Preface which is all propaganda and a short play in which art and propaganda are happily blended together.

The Preface to this play is pure propaganda and the success of the propaganda can be seen from the fact that most of his suggestions have been incorporated in the British Health Scheme and a few of them have been found to be unworkable. The result is that the Preface has become completely out-of-date and is of interest today only for its excellent prose.

But to pass from the Preface to the play is to pass from propaganda to life. The knighthood conferred on Dr. Ridgeon provides the occasion to bring all the leaders of the medical profession together and make them talk about their problems and failings. Each one of them has his own pet theory and he thinks that the others are blunderers. In this talk the weaknesses of all the doctors are exposed. This is his propaganda. But the talk is so beautifully manipulated that the personalities of the doctors emerge beautifully before us. They are not mere mouthpieces of Shaw. Nor are they caricatures. They appear to be living beings, and one who has read the play, can never forget them.

The I Act is a fine blending of art and propaganda. The characters of the doctors are superbly drawn and the propaganda part is put in such a witty and humorous way that it does not appear to be propaganda at all.

As we pass on to the II Act we feet that the artist in Shaw has taken over. Now we are concerned with the eternal problems of goodness and love. He presents before us Louis Dubedat. He is a great artist. According to conventional morality he is a blackguard. But he does not believe in this morality and so cannot be judged by its narrow standards. Judged by his artistic conscience and faith he is a saint. He dies a splendid death uttering his noble artistic creed. He dominates the action in the II, III and IV Acts.

Ridgeon is now faced with a moral dilemma. He can save only one person. Should he save a person who is a genius but leads an ignoble life or a person who is morally upright but has no genius. This dilemma has nothing to do with doctors. Blekinsop need not have been a doctor. He could have been a poor teacher or a bank clerk. It is a problem of the relative merits of great art and conventional morality.

In deciding to sacrifice Dubedat Ridgeon does not as a doctor. He acts as a man who is ruled by his heart. He has fallen in love with the artist's wife and wants to marry her after her husband's death. The artist dies but Ridgeon does not get his reward. In the V Act he is completely disillusioned. He is rejected by Jennifer and leaves the Picture gallery as a completely broken man.

All this is the work of Shaw the artist. The propagandist, of course, peeps in here and there. B.B. expedites Dubedat's death due to his blunder. All the doctors except B.B. appear to be callous when Dubedat dies. Walpole jokes about his borrowing habits. Ridgeon calls his dead body "a thing". In the V Act Shaw brings in his opposition to vivisection. Jennifer says that doctors are callous to human suffering because they inflict needless suffering on animals in their experiments.

But the triumph of the artist over the propagandigst in the later part of the play becomes clear from one contradiction that appears there. In the I Act no doctor seems to have any faith in Ridgeon's discovery. Sir Patrick thinks that it is only old vaccination in a new form. Walpole says that Opsonin is "simple rot". The doctors are proved to be blunderers and the

medical profession is shown to be only a branch of witchcraft. And yet we are told in the V Act that Blenkinsop is completely cured by the Opsonin treatment. And when Jennifer says that Blekinsop had told her that private doctors were "licensed murderers", it sounds a little strange because he had been a private practioner for thirty years.

As we come to the end of the play Shaw's propaganda is lost on us. We feel that the Newspaper Man was an illiterate fool, the artist was a blackguard but the doctors were all decent persons.

The ideas of Shaw about the doctors and their profession have become out-of-date. Still the play is read with great interest by people because of its human interest, its living characters and its wit and humour. The problem has ceased to be of interest but the play is alive even today because it is a work of art.

11
WIT AND HUMOUR IN THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA

Although the sub-title of *The Doctor's Dilemma* is "A Tragedy', it is written wholly in a comic vein. That is because Shaw was a comedian at heart. He had a natural gift of laughter. Shaw believed in correcting people by making them laugh at the absurdities of existing institutions. He has been called a "laughing philosopher". In this play he makes us laugh at the absurdities of the leaders of the medical profession. Its dialogue and Stage Directions are full of wit and humour.

Atmosphere of laughter

The atmosphere of laughter is created at the very beginning of the play by a description of Emmy's funny look. "She has the complexion of a never-washed gypsy, incurable by any detergent; and she has not a regular beard and moustaches, which could at least be trimmed and waxed into masculine presentableness, but a whole crop of small beards and moustaches, mostly springing from moles all over her face". She is extremely ugly but "she has used her ugliness to secure indulgences unattainable by Cleopatra or Fair Rosamund, and has the further great advantage over them that age increases her qualification instead of impairing it". Dr. Ridgeon is about 50 years old and has just been knighted but Emmy treats him as a nurse treats a child who has just learnt to walk. When he comes down to his consulting room she asks him whether he has finished his two eggs and put on his clean vest. When he says, "yes", she says. "Thats my ducky diamond ! Now keep yourself tidy and dont go messing about and dirtying your hands : the people are coming to congratulate you".

Satire

All the eminent doctors come to congratulate Ridgeon and we get an opportunity to see their obsessions and absurdities.

Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonington (popularly known as B.B.) is a fashionable doctor and a court physician. He is "a colossal humbug" and knows nothing of science and medicine but he is always talking of science. He does not give medicines to his patients. "Drugs are a delusion," he says. He uses only anti-toxins and quite often he blunders into success. He says, There are only two rules for anti-toxins. First, don't be afraid of them: second, inject them a quarter of an hour before meals three times a day". His theory is that all diseases can be cured by stimulating the phagocytes and this can be done by injecting any anti-toxin in the patient. Prince Charles got an attack of typhiod. He took a powerful anti-toxin prepared by Ridgeon for T.B. patients and injected it in the body of the prince. The prince became all right. The royal family was very grateful to him. He told them that it was all due to Dr. Ridgeon's excellent serum. So Ridgeon was made Sir Colenso Ridgeon.

B.B. also narrates that he once gave anti-tetanus serum to a patient of typhoid and a typhoid anti-toxin to a case of tetanus. And both the patients recovered.

Ridgeon is proud of his discovery of the Opsonin treatment of T.B. Sir Patrick, however, says that this is nothing but vaccination which his father used to practise half a century back.

Walpole is an eminent surgeon and he believes that all diseases can be cured by removing the patient's Nuciform sac. An opera singer had a growth in her vocal chords. She came to him for a throat operation. He did not touch her throat but removed her Nuciform sac. She got her voice back and thinks that Walpole is the greatest surgeon alive."

Dr. Schutzmacher has amassed a huge amount of wealth by just giving Parrish's Chemical Food to all his patients irrespective of their diseases.

Thus we are amused at the absurd practices and blundering successes of these leaders of the medical profession who are supposed to be the saviours of humanity.

Wit

The doctors also laugh at each other. Shaw makes their talk very witty. When Ridgeon tells Sir Patrick that his discovery of the Opsonin treatment is "the most important that has been made since Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood", he asks him, "Do you hear voices?" When he says "No",

Sir Patrick says, 'I'm glad of that. When my patients tell me they have made a greater discovery than Harvey, and that they hear voices, I lock them up (as mad men)".

When Walpole tells Sir Patrick about his invention of a delicate saw for operating on shoulder blades he says that he had seen it sixty-five years ago. "It was called a cabinetmaker's jimmy then".

The element of unexpectedness makes these statements witty.

When Ridgeon says, "The most tragic thing in the world is a sick doctor", Walpole says, "Yes, by George : it's like a bald-headed man trying to sell a hair-restorer".

When B. B. talks of the bed-side experience of a physician, Walpole says, "What do you see at the bed-side but the outside of the patient ? Well : it isn't his outside thats wrong, except perhaps in Skin diseases. What you want is a daily familiarity with people's insides; and that you can see only at the operating table".

When Walpole leaves, B. B. says, "Walpole has no intellect. A mere surgeon. Wonderful operator ; but, after all, what is operating ? Only manual labour."

Even the illiterate Newspaper Man makes a witty remark. When Walpole tells him that he is making blunders because he belongs to "an illiterate profession, with no qualifications and no public register", the Newspaper Man says. "Oh, I say : you have got your knife into us, havent you ?" Walpole can only say, "I wish I had ; it would make a better man of you".

Stage Directions

Shaw's Stage Directions in this play are a masterpiece of wit and humour.

This is how Redpenny is described : "Surname Redpenny, Christian name unknown and of no importance......He is a wide-open-eyed, ready, credulous, friendly, hasty, youth, with his hair and clothes in reluctant transition from the untidy boy to the tidy doctor".

Sir Ralph is described thus :

"He is a tall man, with a head like a tall and slender egg...He radiates an enormous self-satisfaction, cheering, reassuring, healing by the mere incompatibility of disease or anxiety with his welcome presence. Even broken bones, it is said, have been

known to unite at the sound of his voice." We are amused to read this about a person who is, "scientifically considered, a colossal humbug".

Names

Shaw also creates humour by giving funny names and nicknames to his characters. Dr. Schutzmacher's nickname was Loony. The names 'Redpenny' and 'Dubedat' have strange sounds. Sir Ralph is known as B. B. This sounds like "Booby" which means "a silly person', He says about himself, "In moments of domestic worry, I am simply Ralph. When the sun shines in the home, I am Beedle-Deedle Dumkins".

We are amused at the twisting of some of the names by Emmy and the Newpaper Man. Emmy calls Dr. Schutzmacher "Shoemaker". The Newspaper Man thinks that Ridgeon's name is "Pigeon".

Farce

Shaw introduces an element of Farce in his caricature of the Newspaper Man. This person is "disabled for ordinary business pursuits by a congenital erroneousness which renders him incapable of describing accurately anything he sees, or understanding or reporting accurately anything he hears. As the employment in which these defects do not matter is journalism (for a newspaper, not having to act on its descriptions and reports, but only to sell them to idly curious people, has nothing but honour to lose by inaccuracy and unveracity), he has perforce become a journalist". He cannot write anything with ease. He has never heard of T. B. and thinks that the artist was suffering from 'cubicle'.

He is illiterate and incompetent and does not know what questions to ask. Just after Louis Dubedat's death he wants to ask Mrs. Dubedat "How It Feels to be a Widow". B. B. expresses our feelings when he tells him : "Young man : if you wait until Mrs. Dubedat comes back, you will be able to write an article on 'How It Feels to be Turned out of the House".

The Jester

Shaw once said, "It is by jingling the bell of the jester that I, like Heine, have made people listen to me." Shaw cannot cease to be a jester even in a scene of tragic death. Just after Dubedat's death there are remarks in a lighter vein. B. B. amuses us by his misquotations of Shakespeare. When Sir Patrick says,

"He is in another world now", Walpole says "Borrowing his first five-pound note there, probably." This is misplaced humour and spoils the tragic atmosphere. Shaw cannot get rid of his jesting nature even at the moment of the death of a young artist. But even this joke amuses us because we are not deeply touched by the death of the rascally artist.

Like a true humorist Shaw can laugh even at himself. Dubedat, who is immoral in all his actions because he does not believe in morality, claims to be a disciple of Bernard Shaw.

Feast of wit and humour

The title of this play is : The Doctor's Dilemma—A Tragedy. But it is not at all tragic in spirit. In fact, it is a feast of satire, wit and humour.

12

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FIFTH ACT

Many of the readers feel that the play should have ended at the end of the IV Act with the death of Louis Dubedat. But this is a superficial view of the play and is based on the assumption that Louis Dubedat is the chief character in the play and so his death should end the play. Actually Ridgeon is the chief character in the play and Louis Dubedat is only his victim. So the play should show us in the last Act what effect the events had on his life. The V Act is, therefore, the culmination of the action of the play.

The Fifth Act reveals to us the real motives of Ridgeon in resolving the Dilemma as he did. He had talked to Jennifer in an ambiguous manner and she understands the significance of his words only in this Act.

He knew fully well that Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonington (B. B) did not understand his discovery at all. The medicines were very strong and could be dangerous if not properly used. B. B. did not know how to determine the Opsonin index and to inject the serum in a patient without first determining his opsonin. Index was the surest way to kill him. So in handing over Louis Dubedat to the care of B. B. he was only arranging to send him to his grave. Then why did he do it while assuring Jennifer that "her hero" would be preserved ?

The reason was that he thought that she did not know that the person whom she regarded as "a king of men" was "the most entire and perfect scoundrel, the most miraculously mean rascal, the most callously selfish blackguard that ever made a wife miserable". He thought that someday she would come to know his true nature and that would kill her. But if her husband died before she became disillusioned about him, she would continue to regard him as a hero and would be happy. So he thought that the best way to preserve her hero would be to kill her husband. He

thinks that he has acted as her best friend in making her a widow. He has saved her from making a terrible discovery, from having her life laid waste. By making her a widow he has made her happy. "His works are an imperishable joy and pride for you". He, therefore, wants her to reward him for having made her a widow.

It comes as a shock to him when she tells him that she knew all his weaknesses and yet was the happiest of wives. She was not ignorant. She regarded him as a hero in spite of his weaknesses. He had made her most unhappy by trying to destroy "that wonderful and beautiful life."

So in killing Dubedat he had not helped Jennifer in any way.

What about himself ?

In the days when Jennifer was asking Ridgeon to cure her husband, she had kissed his hands and said that she believed in him. She had pledged her friendship to him and said that her friendship lasted until death. He had fallen in love with her and he thought that if he got her husband killed by entrusting him to the care of B. B., he would be able to marry the widow. But now she tells him that when she told him that she believed in him she only meant that she believed in him as a doctor capable of curing her husband. How could she even think of loving an old man like him ?

When he openly tells her that he was in love with her, she tells him that she has understood him now. Earlier she thought that he had killed him because he did not like Dubedat having a beautiful wife. But now she realizes that he killed her husband not because of jealousy but because of his mistaken love for her. She was not angry with him. She only pitied him because he did not have the sixth sense to understand a person's real nature.

Ridgeon pleads that Dubedat sacrificed everyone including his wife and so he had the right to sacrifice him. She replies that an artist has the right to sacrifice everyone at the alter of his art.

When he pleads that the difference in their years should not be a bar to their marriage, she throws a bombshell at him : she has already married someone else He is shocked and disillusioned. The death of Dubedat has benefited neither Jennifer nor him. He can only say, "Then I have committed a purely disinterested murder !"

Ridgeon now realizes that the way in which he solved his dilemma, was wrong. He should have treated the first patient who came to him. If he had to choose between Louis Dubedat and Blenkinsop he should not have thought of his love for Jennifer when deciding this. He should have cured the artist. In this way he would have benefited the world. Dubedat would have painted good pictures, and he would have made Jennifer happy.

Thus the Fifth Act is important because it shows the effects of the way in which Ridgeon resolved the Dilemma. His romantic dreams are shattered. Dubedat has died but he has triumphed over him. He is crushed. Life seems to be a tragedy to him. It is a shocked and disillusioned Ridgeon that leaves the picture gallery at the end of the play.

13

IS THIS PLAY A TRAGEDY ?

Shaw called *The Doctor's Dilemma* a tragedy in a sub-title. It is true that there are some tragic situations in this play. But, on the whole, it does not conform to any of the accepted patterns of tragedy. It does not have the atmosphere of tragedy. It presents a problem and its interest is kept up by the charming portrayal of doctors and by its wit and humour.

The Greeks believed that a tragedy should have unity. It should be a tragedy from the beginning to the end. There was no scope for laughter in their tragedies. Each tragedy had a hero of gigantic proportions whose fall caused a feeling of terror and awe in the minds of the audience and the readers.

Shakespeare did not believe that laughter should be completely banned in tragedies. In his great tragedies he introduces some humour to relieve the tension of the great disasters. But the general atmosphere is tragic. Each play has a hero who has a towering personality but who has one weakness (called 'the tragic flaw') which causes the tragedy. He fights heroically against heavy odds and his death fills us with terror and affects whole nations. In *The Doctor's Dilemma* Louis Dubedat dies on the stage. But his death does not create the true tragic emotions.

Nor is *The Doctor's Dilemma* a Tragi-Comedy. A Tragi-Comedy is essentially tragic in tone but something happens in it which brings about a happy end of the play. In *The Doctor's Dilemma*, on the other hand, the entire atmosphere is comic. Even the scene of Louis Dubedat's death the Newspaper Man is introduced to create laughter.

We are told that Archer had challenged Shaw to show a death on the stage. Shaw accepted the challenge and showed the death of Louis Dubedat on the stage in this play.

But the mere presentation of death in a play does not make it a tragedy. The dramatist must arouse the proper tragic emotions. The death of Lous Dubedat does not arouse any tragic emotion. The true tragic hero should be a great man who falls because of some fault in his character. Dubedat is certainly not a great man. His wife, of course, deifies him and calls him "a King of Men". But we know that Dubedat is, in the words of B. B., "a vicious and ignorant young man with a talent for drawing". He married Minnie Tinwell and then deserted her and then came back to Jennifer. He borrows money from everyone. He suggests to Ridgeon that he should blackmail his own wife, Jennifer. He also suggests to Ridgeon that he should blackmail his own patients. How can the death of such a blackguard rouse us to our depths ?

He, of course, had a talent for painting. But even this could not have been of a high order. He makes good sketches of doctors but he is not a Michael Angelo. The art magazines like The Brush, The Crayon and The Easel do not praise his paintings very highly.

Perhaps the best thing about him was the way he died. We are touched by his courage in facing life's arch-enemy, death. He does not believe in God and so he does not remember God and he does not repent for his sins. But he says, "I am in heaven, immortal in the heart of my beautiful Jennifer". He says that he has been true to his artistic faith. And then he utters his artistic creed : "I believe in Michael Angelo, Valazquez, and Rembrandt ; in the might of design, the mystery of colour, the redemption of all things by Beauty everlasting and the message of Art that has made these hands blessed. Amen, Amen".

We are deeply touched and we agree with B. B. that he died "splendidly". But we agree with Sir Patrick when he says, "It matters very little how a man dies. What matters is, how he lives".

That his death has not created any tragic emotion is clear from the fact that when Sir Patrick says, "He is in another world now", Walpole cracks a joke : "Borrowing his first five-pound note there, probably".

We, of course, feel a sense of waste. He died very young and if he had lived longer he would have painted many beautiful pictures. We also feel that this is how an artist should die.

But we have no tragic emotion. Dubedat's death, therefore, does not make the play a tragedy.

Slightly more pathetic than Dubedat's death is the fate that awaits Ridgeon at the end. The old bechelor had fallen in love with Mrs. Dubedat. She had pledged everlasting friendship with him and his hope was that after her husband's death Jennifer would marry him. He deceives her by the use of ambiguous words. He tells her, "Your hero will be saved". What he meant was that by killing her husband he would preserve in her mind the illusion that he was a great hero. He deceived Jennifer and fully deserved to be kicked out by her. He had no business to sit in judgement whether Louis Dubedat deserved to live or to die. By putting his treatment in the hands of a blunderer like B. B. and giving him his dangerous medicines he really killed Dubedat. He acts as a villain in sending Dubedat to his grave. We feel that he fully deserves his fate. His bitter disappointment cannot, therefore, make the play a tragedy.

Thus *The Doctor's Dilemma* is not a true tragedy. There is laughter in it from the beginning to the end. The whole play is written in a comic vein. There is, of course, a death. But that does not stir up the true tragic emotions. At the end Ridgeon is rejected by his lady-love. He is shocked and disappointed, but we are not moved by a sense of terror. We feel that he has deserved his fate. The play is a tragedy in the sense that all life has an element of tragedy. Life consists of tears and laughter. It is a mixture of aches and ecstasies, with the aches predominating. It is only in this sense that we can call *The Doctor's Dilemma* a tragedy.

When Shaw was asked about the nature of his plays he said that they were "Sui generis"—unique in themselves. They were not governed by any iron-clad rules. This play is a tragedy for Mrs. Dudebat and for Ridgeon but it is not a tragedy in the true sense of the term, because it does not create any tragic emotions in us.

14

DEFECTS

The Problem

Shaw wrote his plays chiefly to convey his ideas to the public. He wrote *The Doctor's Dilemma* and its Preface to project his ideas about the horrible state of the medical profession as it existed in England at the beginning of this century. The picture that he drew also projected his constructive suggestions for the reform of the medical services.

The play had a temendous impact on the public. During the course of the next few decades the medical services in England were completely changed in England. Most of Shaw's ideas were incorporated in the new schemes. Great Britain has now become a Welfare State with a flourishing National Health Scheme. Gone are the days when poor doctors like Blenkinsops prescribed greengages for all diseases and when bluff-masters like Schutzmacher, humbugs like B.B. and whimsical surgeons like Walpole exploited the public. The state now employs doctors to prevent diseases and to cure them when they appear.

The problems projected in his other play are still burning problems. For example, the problems of love and war projected in *Arms and the Man* interest people today as much as they did when the play was written. This is also true of many of his other plays like *Man and Superman*, *Pygmalion* and others.

But this is not true of *The Doctor's Dilemma.* The ideas of this play have ceased to interest us because most of Shaw's suggestions have been accepted and implemented in Great Britain and are in the process of being implemented in other countries. There are no poor doctors now who live by prolonging diseases. Nor are unnecessary operations performed now just because the surgeons want to get fees from their

patients. New researches are given wide publicity and so no doctor today can remain as ignorant as Blenkinsop.

Doctors do not in modern time consider the morals of the patients when admitting them for treatment. So a dilemma of the type that Dr. Ridgeon faced, is a thing of the past.

The result is that the Preface to *The Doctor's Dilemma* today reads like a historical document on an out-of-date problem. This has also detracted from the interest of the play which is now read not because of its ideas but chiefly because of the charming portraits of the doctors.

No tragedy and no serious dilemma

Archer challenged Shaw to show a death on the stage. Shaw accepted the challenge and started writing *The Doctor's Dilemma*. He probably thought that he was going to write a tragedy. That is why he gave the play a sub-title—A Tragedy. He probably wanted to show Louis Dubedat as a great genius whose premature death would appear to be a tragedy for mankind.

But Shaw has failed to convince us that Louis Dubedat is a genius. His wife, of course, regards him as a king of men. But that is the partiality of a wife for her husband. From his general behaviour we only get the impression that he is a common scoundrel who has a talent for painting.

Because we are not convinced that Dubedat is a genius the dilemma also loses its force. The choice should have been between a great genius who does not believe in conventional morality and a good man who has no genius. But since Louis Dubedat is not a genius there is no serious dilemma.

If Dubedat had been a Michael Angelo his life would have been worth saving in spite of his immoral behaviour. But he is an ordinary artist. That is why the choice is difficult. That is also why his death does not create the true tragic emotions.

Misplaced humour

Humour is a very good thing and everyone enjoys jokes. But nobody enjoys a joke when somebody has just died. Dubedat might have led an immoral life and might have borrowed money from everyone, but he dies a noble death uttering his artistic creed. Everyone is touched. But Shaw spoils the atmosphere by the following misplaced humour :

Sir Patrick : He is in another world now.

Walpole : Borrowing his first five-pound note there, probably.

No fixed purpose

Another defect of the play is that it does not have a well-knitted, unified story. It is difficult to decide with what aim or purpose Shaw wrote this play.

From the title it seems that Shaw wanted to present the dilemma faced by a doctor. He could save only one patient and the dilemma was whether he should have a talented man who was not a good man or a good man who had no talent.

But if this was the main theme of the play, what was the need of a long I Act describing the whims and failures of doctors ? This is wholly irrelevant to the dilemma.

The dilemma arises in the II Act and then is lost sight of in the last three Acts of the play. In the III Act Ridgeon has only to decide whether he would save Dubedat or let him die. Blenkinsop is nowhere in the picture. Ridgeon decides to hand-over Dubedat to the treatment of B. B. and thus virtually signs his death warrant because he is in love with his wife, Jennifer, and wants to marry her after her husband's death. So the moral issue of the dilemma is confused by the introduction of Ridgeon's love for Jennifer.

Perhaps it was Shaw's purpose to show the absurdities and failures of doctors. But in that case the whole question of Ridgeon's dilemma and his romance have no organic connection with the main theme. And if the main theme is the failures of doctors, he contradicts himself because we are told in the V Act that Blenkinsop is completely cured of his T. B. by Ridgeon's Opsonin treatment.

Perhaps he wanted to base his play on Ridgeon's romance. In that case the title is a misnomer and the detailed discussion of the failures of doctors is wholly irrelevant to the main theme.

Perhaps he wanted to show that doctors cannot do their work well because they are poor. In this way he perhaps wanted to make out a case for the nationalization of the medical services.

But if this was his purpose he should have shown the doctors as skilful and competent persons who could not do their duty well because society did not pay them to prevent diseases and to cure persons who happen to contract diseases. Instead of that he shows them as blundering idiots. If Harley Street is

full of blunderers, how will nationalising the medical profession help the nation ?

Shaw is not clear about what he likes and what he does not like and so he often contradicts himself. He says that a poor doctor is most dangerous. But the only poor doctor he introduces in the play is Blenkinsop and he is a very decent and harmless person.

Thus the main defect of the play is that it lacks unity. When we come to the end of the play we are not sure what it is all about.

15

WHAT IS TRUE MORALITY ?

The moral question of real goodness comes before Dr. Ridgeon when he has to choose one patient out of the two who approach him to cure them of T. B. He has discovered a new cure for tuberculosis. Many patients approach him. He chooses ten of them who, he thinks, deserve to be saved. Two patients now approach him. One is a talented artist but is not a good man. The other is a good man but has no talent. He chooses the good man and cures him and sends the talented artist to his grave.

The questions arise from this decision :

1. What is true goodness ?
2. Is Ridgeon competent to decide who is good and who is not ?

The question of goodness

The question of goodness is an eternal problem and there is no clear-cut answer to it. Perfect goodness is an attribute of God. No human being, not even a saint, can be perfectly good. There are different degrees and different standards of goodness. An artist has his own standard of goodness. He creates works of art which are a source of pleasure and inspiration to millions of people for ages to come. Why should we bother how he manages his finances and what his relations with women are ? Is a doctor who has forgotten all that he learnt in his medical college and who treats all diseases by giving the patients a pound of ripe greengages, a better man ? He is a private practitioner himself and he confesses that private doctors are "ignorant licensed murderers". Is such a man better than the artist ?

Morality

Since it is impossible to determine what true goodness is, Society has made a code of conduct which it calls morality.

Different societies have different codes of conduct. What is moral in one society is immoral in another.

Thus Louis Dubedat was married to Jennifer. While on a visit to another place he fell in love with Minnie Tinwell and she is with him. They married and had three weeks of perfect hapiness and then they separated and Louis came back to Jennifer. So Louis Dubedat is regarded by the doctors as a bigamist and due to that they regard him as a criminal. But in a Muslim society where a man is allowed to marry four women at one time, Dubedat will be regarded as a perfectly normal man.

The second charge against Dubedat is that he borrows money from everyone. He is young budding artist, and yet he is so poor that he has to keep on borrowing money. It is not a shame that society keeps its artists, who sustain its intellect and soul, so appallingly poor that they have to survive on borrowed money ? Was it not the duty of the state to arrange that Dubedat should have enough money so that he could concentrate on his art in peace ? And when he got T. B., was it not the duty of the state to give him the best treatment free of cost ? Should he have been thrown at the mercy of doctors whom one of their own tribe calls "licensed murderers" ?

Society has failed in its duty to this young genius. But instead a of blaming society they call him a "reptile" and kill him.

According to the laws of "morality prescribed by his contempories, Louis Dubedat was an immoral person. But if we read an account of his glorious death we cannot help feeling that he was an artist-saint.

The Judge

Ridgeon judges the goodness of Louis and Blenkinsop and decides to cure Blenkinsop and to hand over Louis to be treated by B. B. which was the surest way to kill him. Does a doctor have the right to accept or reject a patient on the basis of his supposed goodness ?

And what about the conduct of Ridgeon himself. He virtually murders Louis Dubedat because he has fallen in love with his wife and wants to marry his widow. Is this conduct not highly immoral ?

If we judge all these characters aright we shall find that the honourable doctor who has been honoured with a knighthood is actually the real villain of the play.

16

CHARACTERIZATION IN THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA

Generally it is said that Shaw was not interested in characterization. He wrote plays only to convey his ideas to the audiences and to the reading public; and the characters were his mouthpieces for conveying those ideas. But this is not true of *The Doctor's Dilemma*. The ideas propagated by Shaw in the Preface and the play have become completely out-of-date. So if the play is read today it is because of the charming portraits he has drawn of the doctors, the artist and the artist's wife.

Flat and Round Characters

Most of the characters are, of course, 'flat' characters. They are types and have been introduced only to represent the dramatist's own point of view. They are puppets and they act according to the strings pulled by the dramatist. Walpole, for instance, is a doctor with a ruling idea or mania, namely that all diseases are caused by blood poisoning and can be cured by removing the patient's Nuciform sac. Dr. Schutzmacher has worked only on one idea: "Advice and medicine six pence. Cure Guaranteed". Irrespective of the diseases of the patient, he only gives Parrish's Chemical Food. Blenkinsop is a typical, poor man's doctor whose patients cannot afford to purchase medicines and who, therefore, gives them only a pound of greengages. Sir Patrick too is a typical cynic who thinks that there is nothing new under the sun and the same discoveries are rediscovered every fifteen, twenty, fifty and even one hundred and fifty years. Emmy and Redpenny also play their parts in an amusing manner. But they are all flat characters. They are two-dimensional and are static in their roles. But even these appear to be living characters whithin the requirements of the drama.

Then there are a few characters which are three-dimensional. They appear to be living characters and they seem to grow as the play proceeds. They present life and not a point of view. They are 'round' characters.

B. B.

One such character is B. B. He has a charming personality. He is tall and handsome and radiates cheerfulness all around. We cannot imagine a disease staying in his presence. Even broken bones, it is said, have been known to unite at his voice. He is a born healer and so he is naturally a very successful practitioner.

Scientifically speaking he is a humbug but he is most eloquent about the value of science. He has heard a few things about the germ theory and the phagocytes and he can deliver lectures on the subject. He uses different anti-toxins on all types of patients and mostly he is triumphant. Even when he fails in the case of Dubedat he does not give up. He wants to explain it in scientific terms and wants to write a paper on it.

He does not agree with Ridgeon's discovery but he likes Ridgeon all the same and it is on his recommendation that he is knighted.

Some of his statements are really memorable. When Ridgeon says that anti-toxins are dangerous unless they are used at the correct time, he says, "Everything is dangerous unless you take it at the right time. An apple at breakfast does you good : an apple at bed-time upsets you for a week. There are only two rules for anti-toxins. First, dont be afraid of them : second, inject them a quarter of an hour before meals, three times a day." It renders Ridgeon speechless.

And can we ever forget his delicious description of Walpole ? "Walpole has no intellect. A mere surgeon. Wonderful operator ; but, after all, what is operating ? Only manual labour".

And can we forget how he takes Sir Patrick's portrait from Dubedat without paying him anything ? Dubedat has been borrowing huge sums from doctors. He wants 12 guineas from Sir Patrick for the portrait. B. B. takes it and presents it to Sir Patrick. But does he pay Dubedat ? No. He tells him that the amount will be adjusted in his fees.

His character grows from scene to scene. At first he regards Louis Dubedat as a blackguard and an immoral rascal. But he does not consider the morals of his patients. When Dubedat is abandoned by all the doctors, B.B. takes up his treatment. He tells Jennifer that he would be treated like a member of the royal family.

When Dubedat dies B. B. is tremendously moved. He says, "Poor young fellow! How well he died! I feel a better man, really". He is so deeply touched that he cannot help quoting and misquoting Shakespeare.

In the V Act we see another facet of his character. He has a very kind heart. The animals in his house are like spoilt children. When Walpole had to take a splinter out of a mastiff's paw, he had to turn Sir Ralph out of the room.

B. B's character grows as the action proceeds. He is one of the immortals. Can we ever forget him ?

He is really a three-dimensional character.

Ridgeon

In his own way, Ridgeon is also a living, three-dimensional character. He keeps growing and changing as the play proceeds. In the beginning we find that he is a serious research scholar who has worked very hard to find a cure for tuberculosis. He is 50 years old but he is still a bachelor.

Then he meets Jennifer and his life takes a sudden turn. He falls in love with her and wants to serve her by curing her husband. Then he finds that her husband is a good artist but most undesirable as a man. Now he is on the horns of a dilemma. Should he cure Dubedat who has talent but is not a good man or Blenkinsop who is a good man but has no talent.

Then he realizes that he is deeply in love with Jennifer and would like to marry her. So he decides to get Dubedat killed in order to marry the widow. He thinks that Jennifer likes him and would agree to marry him after her husband's death.

He think that Jennifer regards her husband as a hero because she does not know what a blackguard he is. So he decides that the best way to preserve her hero would be to kill her husband.

After Dubedat's death he goes to Jennifer to get his reward. But he finds that he had completely misunderstood Jennifer.

She knew all the weaknesses of her husband and yet regarded him as a king of men. Jennifer had never thought of him as a lover. He is told that she has married another person and he is virtually kicked out of the Picture Gallery.

Jennifer

Another character whom we cannot forget is Jennifer. She is the true wife of her artist husband. She has married him only to dedicate her beauty and her money for the fullest development of his artistic talent. She knows his weaknesses regarding money and women and yet regards him as a god. Her feelings for her husband are the noblest sentiments in the play.

Louis Dubedat

Louis Dubedat is another interesting character in the play. He is introduced quite late in the play, but once he comes before us he dominates the scene. He does not have a fixed character but he changes from situation to situation. He gives us surprises and so he seems to be a three-dimensional character.

He does not believe in traditional morality. He is already married to a beautiful girl but he meets Minnie Tinwell and marries her and after spending all her money deserts her and returns to his Jennifer. He tries to borrow money from all the doctors and is surprised if someone wants the money back. He asks Ridgeon for £ 150 and suggests to him to blackmail his wife and get £ 200 in return.

But he does all these things with so much confidence that we do not condemn him as a sinner. We start enjoying his pranks. He has taken away Walpole's gold cigarette case and when asked about it he very coolly gives him a pawn ticket. When the doctors ask him questions he puts them on the defensive. He proves that they only pretend to be moralists. Actually they are charmed by police cases and immoral actions. They suspect every noble lady of immoral behaviour and yet are "supposed" to be gentlemen. As for Minnie Tinwell, he made a great sacrifice in marrying her. He could have been sent to prison for bigamy. But he took this risk in order to provide happiness to her.

He gives us one surprise after another. He amuses us by saying that he is a follower of George Bernard Shaw.

Conventional moralists may regard him as a sinner but his artistic conscience is clear. He has never done anything mean.

He has never denied his faith. In fact he is trying to become a superman.

Dubedat's character evolves and changes and we get a big surprise at the time of his death. He is dying at a very early age but he is not afraid of death. He has great affection for his wife and he asks her to remain beautiful and marry again. And then he dies like an artist-saint uttering his artistic creed. Even his worst critics are moved by his glorious death.

Dubedat's character is really "round" and three-dimensional.

No Villain

If we look for a villain in this play we shall be disappointed. Evil in Shaw is due to social systems. The villain in this play is the capitalistic system of society which forces a doctor to live on the diseases of his patients and which lets a creator of artistic beauty die as a pauper.

Splendid Gallery

The ideas of this play have influenced state policy in England and many other countries of the world. So today we find nothing very striking in the ideas of the play. But the play is still read with delight for its splendid gallery of doctors and the fine portraits of the artist and his wife.

17

THE MAIN CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

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(1) Sir Colenso Ridgeon.

Young in spirit : Ridgeon is the central character of *The Doctor's Dilemma.* The play is concerned with his dilemma, the way in which he resolves it and the effect of that decision on his own life.

He is a man of 50 but he has not shaken off his youth yet. He is more the young man than the titled physician.

Susceptible to beauty : Emmy, who knows him well, says that he is put in a good mood by beautiful women. He is extremely susceptible to the beauty of women. That is why Jennifer, who is an extremely beautiful woman, fascinates him and that changes the entire course of events in this play.

Genuine doctor : He is a genuine doctor. He has done very hard work for his research. "The lines on his face are those of overwork". His treatment completely cures Blenkinsop of his tuberculosis. He is not a scientific humbug and blunderer like B.B. He does not have an absurd theory of treatment like Walpole. He is not a money-snatcher like Schutzmacher. Although he is an eminent doctor he is not rich. In fact, he has been using all the money that he can spare for his researches.

His discovery : The play begins with the conferment of knighthood on him for his Opsonin treatment of T. B. He first prepared a powerful anti-toxin to stimulate the white blood corpuscles or phagocytes which eat the disease germs. But this inoculation succeeded in some cases, while it made some patients much worse. Then he did research work patiently and he found that the phagocytes eat the tuberculosis germs only when these germs are finely buttered with a substance which Ridgeon called Opsonin. This Opsonin is produced in the human body but it is not produced in the same quantities all the time.

Sometimes the butter factory' is on the up-grade and sometimes it is on the down-grade. If the inoculation is given when the butter factory of the body is in the up-grade the person will be cured. If the inoculation is given when the butter factory is in the down-grade the person will be killed. By examining the patient's blood he could give the Opsonin Index within 15 minutes. "If the figure is 1, inoculate and cure : if it is under point eight, inoculate and kill". The reason why Louis Dubedat was killed seems to be that B. B. gave him the inoculation without checking his Opsonin Index.

His dilemma : Now the question arises : what was his dilemma and how did it arise ?

The facilities in the hospital are limited. He cannot admit everyone who comes for his Opsonin treatment. So he wants to take *those who are worth saving*. This involves him in a moral debate as to who is more worth saving.

Mrs. Dubedat approaches him to cure her husband. She tells him that he is worth saving because he is a good artist. Ridgeon is impressed by his sketches of his wife and agrees to take him. But then he comes to know that he is bigamist and borrows money from everyone without any intention of returning it. At that very time his old class-fellow, Blenkinsop, tells him that he is also suffering from T. B. and appeals to him to cure him. Blenkinsop is a good man but has no talent.

The question before him now is to whom he should save—a man of talent who is not a good man or a good man who has no talent.

But this straight question is not answered by Ridgeon in a straight manner. He is in love with Mrs. Dubedat and feels that if Dubedat dies he can marry the widow. So he takes Blenkinsop under his own treatment and condemns Dubedat to be treated by B. B. who does not understand the Opsonin treatment at all and was likely to kill his patients.

His motives : He has three motives in killing Dubedat and all of them are wrong.

(i) He feels that Louis Dubedat is a most undesirable person and so he decides that he would not raise even a little finger to save "this reptile".

But a doctor has no business to judge the morals of his patients. He should treat the first patient who comes to him,

whether he is good or bad. Dubedat came to him first and Blenkinsop afterwards. So he should have chosen Dubedat.

(2) He had fallen in love with Jennifer and he thought that she also liked him. So his idea was that he would be able to marry her after the death of her husband.

But he hau a very wrong idea about Jennifer's attitude towards him. She gave him all the smiles and fovours and pledged everlasting friendship to him because she wanted him to cure her husband. When later he tells her that he was in love with her she is surprised and asks him how he, an elderly man, thonght of loving the young wife of another man. Ridgeon is shocked at his own blunder and can only say : "Dubedat thou-art avenged."

(3) He thought that Jennifer idolised her husband because she did not know what a mean blackguard he was. When she would come to know the reality about him she would be most miserable. So he should be killed before his wife, was disillusioned about him.

In this respect also Ridgeon was wholly wrong. She knew all the weaknesses of her husband and yet regarded him as a king of men Her faith in him was indestructible.

Dubedate's death did not benefit Jennifer. And it did not benefit Ridgeon because Jennifer married another person. That is why he says at the end, "I have committed a purely disinterested murder". He means that he killed him for nothing. And the world lost a promising artist.

No understanding of human nature : Ridgeon does not understand human nature at all. Jennifer says to him, "It is a sort of sixth sense that you do not have." She means that all human beings posses five senses—sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. But some people have a sixth sense which is an instinct or intuition to understand another person's real character. He could neither understand the greatness of Louis Dubedat's soul nor the depth of the affection that Jennifer had for her husband.

Lacks moral integrity : Ridgeon is not true to his profession. A doctor's honour requires that he sould treat every patient who comes to him to the best of his ability. To kill a patient with the idea of marrying his widow is far more immoral than all the immoral actions of Louis Dubedat.

After handing over Dubedat's case to B. B. and thus declaring his doom, he cheats Mrs. Dubedat by playing on words. He tells her that *her hero would be preserved.* What he means is that if her husband lives on she will be able to see his faults. He will not remain a hero any longer. So her husband must killed in order to preserve her hero. She does not understand this hidden meaning and so she gets a false sense of security. She is, therefore, very angry when she comes to know that he had deliberately killed her husband.

His punishment : Ridgeon comes to the Picture Gallery with the idea that he would purchase a few pictures of "the clever brute" and would propose marriage to Jennifer. But he finds that Jennifer has already married another man and her husband has purchased those pictures for her. He leaves the picture gallery as a heart-broken man.

As J. L. Wisenthal has said, "the artist who was faithful to his profession is posthumously triumphant over the doctor who has been unfaithful to his by putting human above professional considerations".

(2) Louis Dubedat

Louis Dubedat is one of the important characters in *The Doctor's Dilemma.* He is still a boy growing into manhood. He is 23. He is pretty but not effiminate. He has a frank smile and is not shy. He has tremendous self-confidence and is not overawed by the giants of the medical profession. He is suffering from tuberculosis and it is his wife's appeal to Dr. Ridgeon to take him under his treatmen which causes the dilemma in the doctor's mind. He is a promising artist and he impresses everyone around him except Sir Patrick. He dominates the action in the II, III and IV Acts of this play.

A talented artist : Louis Dubedat is a talented artist. His portrait of his wife and his sketches of the doctors at the hotel at Richmond convince Ridgeon that he is a genius. At the same time he is not such a great artist as Michael Angelo. If he had been one of the greatest artists of the world there would have been no dilemma in Ridgeon's mind. He would have easily chosen him as the person who deserved to be saved more than anyone else. The art magazines do not give him very high praise. He is a good artist but not one of the outstanding artists of the world.

His first weakness : money : As the doctors come in close contact with him they find out his weaknesses. He asks everyone to lend some money to him. He is an artful beggar. He tells B.B. that his wife has taken a fancy to him. He is very busy and so he wants B. B. to come and give her company. Then he asks him to lend £ 10 to him. Then he says exactly the same thing to Walpole. Later he tells Ridgeon the same thing. He exploits his wife's beauty to borrow money from the rich doctors. And he has no intention of returning it. When Ridgeon tells him that he has no money to spare, he says, "you mean you would want the money back again". He even borrows half-a-crown from poor Blenkinsop by saying that he wanted it only for five minutes in order to tip the chambermaid and he quietly walks away with it. He takes away Walpole's gold cigarette case and pawns it.

His second weakness : women : When Mr. and Mrs. Dubedat leave, a hotel maid, Minnie Tinwell, comes and tells them that she is the real Mrs. Dubedat. They are all shocked. Then she tells them that Louis had married her and spent all her money and then deserted her.

When the doctors tell him about Minnie and accuse him of bigamy, he does not become nervous. He is not ashamed of his conduct. On the other hand, he puts the doctors on the defensive by proving that they are moral fanatics who take delight in divorce suits and police cases. If the police had come to know about his marriage to Minnie he would have been put into prison. So did he not make a great sacrifice in order to give hapiness to poor Minnie ?

B. B. calls him "a scoundrel" and "an infamous rascal". Ridgeon calls him "a reptile". Walpole tells him that he has no confidence in his honour. He calls him "an unscrupulous thief" and "a rotten blackguard". B. B. calls him "a vicious and ignorant young man with a talent for drawing".

But this condemnation has no effect on him. He does not believe in morality. He is a disciple of Bernard Shaw. They might regard him as a sinner but he is trying to become a superman.

Dishonourable : Louis asks Ridgeon to lend him £ 150 and suggests to him that he can get this money back and £ 50 more by blackmailing his own wife, Jennifer. He also tells him that he must be knowing many secrets of his patients. He should

threaten to reveal these secrets unless they purchase Dubedat's pictures.

And all this demand he makes half an hour after he had made a solemn promise to his wife never to ask anyone for money.

Conscience makes all of us cowards. Dubedat has no conscience and so he is free and comfortable.

He has no manners and no gratitude. B. B. is an eminent court physician and he has undertaken to treat Dubedat. Instead of being grateful to him he treats him very badly. He has made a sketch of Sir Patrick for which he wants twelve guineas. B. B. takes it from him and presents it to Sir Patrick. He does not pay Dubedat anything because he says that his fees would come to more than that. At this Dubedat calls him "a thief". Instead of being grateful to the eminent doctors he thinks that they are treating him because it would be a feather in their cap to cure a rising artist.

In *Man and Superman* the Devil warns us to beware of the pursuit of the superhuman. "It leads to an indiscriminate contempt of the human".

He has a conscience in the world of art but none in the world of men. He feels that an artist has a right to sacrifice everyone in order to attain the height of his art. He can sacrifice anyone if it enables him to paint a picture better. Dubedat sacrifice his wife, other women and friends in order to become a better artist.

Jennifer's hero : Jennifer knows all his weaknesses and yet regards him as a King of Men. She married him so that her beauty and her money might be used for his fulfilment. When he is dying he tells her to put on beautiful clothes, to remain happy and to marry again. All this shows that he really loved his wife. She would be his immortality.

His self-confidence : Generally artists are very shy. But Louis Dubedat has tremendous self-confidence. He is not overawed by the eminent doctors. They are all older than he. His life depends upon them. They are the leaders of the profession. But he treats them as equals. He addresses Ridgeon as "Ridgeon" and not as "Sir Colenso". He talks to the other doctors also with easy familiarity. Grave charges are levelled against him but he does not become nervous. He makes a

counter-attack on the doctors for their belief in a conventional morality in which he has no faith.

His death : It may be said of Louis Dubedat that his last moments were the finest moments of his life. His artistic conscience was clear. He was dying in his young age but he was not afraid to die. He did not want his wife to mourn for him. She should put on beautiful clothes and remain happy. She should marry again. He asks his wife to be kind even to Ridgeon. Then he died with his artistic creed on his lips.

"I believe in Michael Angelo, Velasquez and Rembrandt ; in the might of design, the mystery of colour, the redemption of all thing by Beauty everlasting, and the message of Art that has made these hands blessed. Amen. Amen".

Thus the painter -died painting his finest picture on his wife's mind.

This might have been a pose. Ridgeon called him a "dying actor". But all the same we are deeply touched. He might have lived like a scoundrel but he died like an artist-saint.

Lifelike : Louis Dubedat is thus the combination of a great artist and a rotten blackguard. Some critics say that is not true to life. But there have been many great artists who have been very undesirable men. They have never bothered about man-made morality. Shaw's biographers have told us that the original of Louis Dubedat was a real man called Aveling. Louis seems to be a real man and in spite of all his immoral actions we all like him.

(3) Jennifer

Her beauty : Jennifer is the wife of the artist, Louis Dubedat. She is described in the Stage Directions as "an arrestingly good-looking young woman". "She has something of the grace and romance of a wild creature, with a good deal of the elegance and dignity of a fine lady.........She has a figure in which any dress would like well.........She is tall, slender and strong and has narrow, subtle, dark fringed eyes".

Shaw thought that he had not made Jennifer charming enough. He wrote to Lillah McCarthy : "I am sorry to have to tell you that the artist's wife is the sort of woman I hate and you will have your wock cut out for you in making her fascinating". But his impression was wrong. Jennifer, as she

appears in the play, is a very fascinating woman. She charms everyone.

Her determination : Her husband is suffering from tuberculosis. When she hears that Dr. Ridgeon has discoved a new cure for T. B., she comes to see him. Emmy tells her that Ridgeon will see no one. But she says that she will wait as long as necessary but she must see him. Emmy is impressed by her beauty and she feels that this lady is bound to charm Dr. Ridgeon who is fifty years old but is still a bachelor.

Her charm : Everyone is attracted towards her. Sir Ralph (B.B.) stays to talk to her while she is waiting to meet Ridgeon. He says that she is "a charming woman". Walpole also stays to talk to her and offers to operate on her husband free of charge because he wants to see her happy.

Jennifer is a very resourceful woman. She is determined to see Dr. Ridgeon. She tips Emmy and so when all the doctors leave, Emmy persuades Ridgeon to see her. He wants to dismiss her within a few minutes and so he tells his assistant, Redpenny, to come after five minutes and tell him that someone is dying in the hospital and he is required there immediately. She will take the hint and leave. But when she comes in, Ridgeon is enchanted by her beauty and wants her to stay on. So when Redpenny comes to give that fake message, Ridgeon asks him to get out and he tells Jennifer that it was just a trick to dismiss her. She presses him to accept her husband for his new Opsonin treatment. He explains that his hands are full. He has selected ten cases with one criterion—Is he worth saving ? Then Jennifer tells him that her husband's young life is really worth saving. He is a very talented artist. She shows him some sketches of her made by her husband. He is tremendously impressed and asks her whether they are for sale. She requests him to take all of them but save his precious life. He is convinced that Dubedat's life is worth saving and he invites her and her husband to dinner which he is giving to his doctor friends in honour of his knighthood. He honours her by saying that as he is a bachelor she should entertain the guests for him.

At the dinner everyone is charmed by both of them. She impresses everyone with her beauty, manners and culture. Dubedat makes wonderful sketches of the doctors on the menu cards. They are all convinced about his being a genius. Ridgeon assures Mrs. Dubedat that he would cure her husband.

When he coughs, Ridgeon says, "Never fear. Never mind. I'll make that cough all right".

The dilemma : So far there is no dilemma. But after the couple has gone, B. B. and Walpole tell them that he had borrowed money from them saying that his wife had taken a fancy to them and they should spend some time with her. Dr. Schutzmacher also says that he tried to borrow money from him. He has taken away half a crown even from poor Blenkinsop. And to crown it all, he had borrowed Walpole's gold cigarette case and did not return it.

Then Minnie Tinwell, a hotel maid, comes and tells them that Louis Dubedat had married her and deserted her after three weeks.

Blenkinsop now reveals that he is suffering from T. B. and he appeals to Ridgeon to cure him.

Now a dilemma arises before Ridgeon. Should he cure a talented artist who is a bigamist and unscrupulous in matters of money or an honest and decent man who has no talent ? But this moral dilemma is not solved on its merits. Ridgeon is in love with Jennifer and the only way in which he can marry her is by killing her husband. Outwardly he says that he would not lift a finger to save this "reptile". But at the back of his mind is the desire to kill Dubedat so that he can marry his widow. Thus Junnifer's beauty and charm are indirectly responsible for the death of her husband.

Her idealism : Ridgeon's decision to let Dubedat die is confirmed when he hears about her idealism. She had married Louis Dubedat only to help a rising but poor artist with her beauty and her money. It worked well. It saved him the expense of hiring a model. The sketches that he made of her sold very well. Now she tells Ridgeon that if Louis does something disgraceful, she would go back to Cornwall and jump down from a cliff. Ridgeon argues that she is happy because she does not know about her husband's disgraceful conduct. He is her hero because she does not know that the person whom she idolises as "the King of Men" is a perfect blackguard. When she comes to know his true nature she would feel most miserable. He should be killed before that happens. Ridgeon was sure that her 'hero' could be preserved only by killing her husband.

Motherly instinct : Jennifer has a motherly instinct in relation to her husband. She saves him from all the troubles of life. She sacrifices her beauty and her money to enable him to become a great artist. When she finds that he is suffering from T.B. she tries her best to get him cured. She knows all his weaknesses and yet regards him as a god.

An optimist : She is a great optimist. She does not give up the hope of saving her husband up to the last moment. Just when he is dying she says that she would take him to Cornwell and he would recover there.

Very brave : She faces the death of her husband very courageously. He hated black clothes, tears and widows. She keeps up a smiling face and she appears a few minutes later in bright clothes with a radiant face. And according to the wishes of her husband she remarries at the earliest opportunity.

Her Friendship : She pledges everlasting friendship to Ridgeon. He misunderstands her and thinks that she is in love with him. But there was not the slightest tinge of love in that. Her friendship was in relation to her husband. She was friendly with Ridgeon only because she was sure that he would be able to cure him. When she becomes certain that he was not her husband's friend, she refuses even to shake hands with him.

Her romantic temperament : From her early age she wanted to dedicate herself to the service of a genius and she thinks that God sent Louis to her in answer to her prayers. She adores him and the finest sentiments are uttered by her about her husband. He also loves her ardently and calls her "Jinny-Gwinny". After her husband's death she wrote his biography in which he was represented as a king of men. She has an undying faith in his genius.

Thus Jennifer is a charming, impulsive, resourceful, romantic and highly energetic woman. Very early in life she had formed an ideal and she tried her best to live according to that ideal and to a large extent she succeeded.

(4) Sir Patrick Cullen.

Old Irish doctor : Sir Patrick Cullen (called by his friends as Old Paddy Cullen) is a delightful, old Irish doctor who has settled in London. He has adapted himself completely to

London Life. He has now given up practice. Although he is 70 years old he has a sound body and an alert mind. His talk is full of shrewd comments. His attitude to Ridgeon, whom he likes, is whimsical and fatherly. To the others he is a little gruff and uninviting. He finds the world very interesting to him.

Clear headed : He is very clear-headed. When Ridgeon tells him that he is not feeling well, his diagnosis is that of an experienced man. He says, "There is nothing wrong with your spine ; and there is nothing wrong with your heart ; but there is something wrong with your common sense. You are not going to die ; but you may be going to make a fool of yourself". This proves to be very correct. Within the next few weeks Ridgeon makes a fool of himself regarding Jennifer.

When Ridgeon is faced with the dilemma whether he should take Louis Dubedat or Blenkinsop for treatment, Sir Patrick puts the dilemma in very beautiful words : "Well, Mr. Saviour of Lives : which is it to be ? that honest decent man Blenkinsop, or that rotten blackguard of an artist, eh ?" Then he gives his own judgment : "To me, it is a plain choice between a man and a lot of pictures". Very tactfully he suggests that if he wants to kill Dubedat he should leave him in B. B.'s hands.

Ridgeon takes him into his confidence regarding his love for Jennifer and his desire to marry her after Dubedat is no more. Sir Patrick gives him the correct warning. He says, "Perhaps she wn'it have you, you know". If Ridgeon had taken Sir Patrick's advice and saved both the men, his life would not have taken a tragic turn as it actually did.

His eccentricities : Like other doctors in the play, Sir Patrick has his own eccentricities. He is convinced that there is nothing new under the sun. The so-called discoveries are only old things with new names. He says, "Most discoveries are made regularly every fifteen years; and it's fully a hundred and fifty since yours was made last. That is something to be proud of. But your discovery is nothing new. It's only inoculation."

Walpole tells him that he has invented a new saw for operating on shoulder blades. Sir Patrick praises it and then says that he remembers to have seen it sixtyfive years ago. It was in those days called a cabinet maker's jimmy. Walpole only

laughs at the idea as the whim of an old man, not to be taken seriously.

Moral sense : At the dinner at Richmond all the doctors except Sir Patrick are impressed by Dubedat's superficial manners. B. B. asks him, "what could be wrong with him?" Sir Patrick replies, "There are two things that can be wrong with any man. One of them is a cheque. The other is a woman". Later it is found that Louis Dubedat is a sinner in both respects. Sir Patrick, therefore, calls him a blackguard and sticks to his opinion up to the end. He represents humanity's fundamental moral sense.

Common sense : Sir Patrick is a man of common sense. He hates sentimentality. The sentimental B. B. is touched by Dubedat's death. But not Sir Patrick. He only says, "That is how the wicked die". When B. B. says, "Poor fellow! How well he died!", Sir Patrick says, "It matters very little how a man dies. What matters is, how he lives. Every fool that runs his nose against a bullet is a hero nowadays, because he dies for his country. Why dont he live for it to some purpose?"

Here Sir Patrick voices the feelings of his creator, Shaw himself.

Prof. Brown has said that "Sir Patrick is particularly important for his ability to put things in historical perspective. He knows that medicine works in cycles, that methods of treatment come into fashion and go out again. His dry wit and honesty are a great contribution to the play".

Because of his age, his common sense and his genial and paternal attitude, Sir Patrick is loved and respected by all the doctors. B. B. says that he is "the cleverest of us all".

(5) B. B.

A born healer : Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonington (known in the play as B. B.) is a court physician. His patients come from the higher circles of society. He is about 60, tall and somewhat fat. His head is like a slender egg. He is good-natured and radiates cheerfulness and self-satisfaction. He is a born healer. Even broken bones have been known to unite at the sound of his voice. He has a fascinating personality and a musical voice. He talks eloquently about science but as a doctor he is no better than a mountebank.

In his own blundering way he is responsible for Ridgeon's knighthood. The prince was suffering from typhoid. He took a powerful anti-tuberculosis serum from Ridgeon's laboratory and injected it in the patient. The prince recovered. The royal family was very grateful to him. He told them that it was all due to Ridgeon. So a knighthood was conferred on Ridgeon.

He does not understand the theories of other doctors and has a poor opinion about them. About Walpole he says. "Walpole has no intellect. A mere surgeon. Wonderful operator; but, after all, what is operating? Only manual labour......The Nuciform sac is utter nonsense : there is no such organ."

Occasionally he acts in a fine manner. Louis Dubedat has made a fine sketch of Sir Patrick and B. B. purchases it for 12 guineas. But he does not pay the money. He says to him, "I need not settle with you now, Mr. Dubedat : my fees will come to more than that".

He does not know what to say at what time. When Louis Dubedat is dying chiefly because of his mistake, he says that the case is "very interesting." He would write a paper on it.

After Dubedat's death he makes the tragic atmosphere comic by misquoting Shakespeare's lines.

No moral judgment : Unlike Ridgeon, he takes up the treatment of a patient without considering whether he is worth saving or not. He says that if he were to sit in moral judgment on his patients, he would come to the conclusion that the majority of them were better dead. That is why he does not hesitate to take up the case of Dubedat although he knows that he is a blackguard. Jennifer enchants him and so he promises to her that he will treat her husband as if he were a member of the royal family.

B. B. is somewhat sentimental and so he is deeply touched by Louis Dubedat's death. He says, "He died splendidly......He died extremely well, remarkably well. He has set us an example."

His theory : He has his own theories of medical treatment. He thinks that "drugs are a delusion". Bacteriology has become a fashion and so he has evolved a simple formula for curing all diseases. "Find the germ and kill it". He has heard that anti-toxins work by stimulating the phagocytes. So he jumps to the conclusion that any anti-toxin is good enough for every disease. He says, "There are only two rules for anti-toxins. First, don't

be afraid of them : second, inject them a quarter of an hour before meals, three times a day."

When Ridgeon says, "Anti-toxins are dangerous unless they are injected at the right time." He explains, "Everything is dangerous unless you take it at the right time. An apple at breakfast does you good : an apple at bedtime upsets you for a week". He dislikes Shaw because the latter was an anti-vaccinationist.

His practice : his blunders : He boasts that he treated a scarlet fever case with a hydrophobia serum from the Pasteur Institute. He injected an anti-tetanus serum to a patient of typhoid and anti-typhoid antitoxin to a patient of tetanus and both the patients became all right. He says, "Ever since that I have used all sorts of anti-toxins absolutely indiscriminately".

Ridgeon says, "To put a tube of serum into his hands is murder : simple murder". That explains why he entrusted the treatment of Louis Dubedat to B. B.

Dubedat's disease is aggravated because he gave him the powerful anti-toxin at a time when his Opsonin factory was in the negative phase. Walpole tells him bluntly that he has killed Louis. But he says. "Ridgeon's serum has cooked our young friend's goose".

Though B. B. is responsible for Louis Dubedat's early death, Jennifer remains friendly with him because he did it out of ignorance and not deliberately. Jennifer also admires his kindness to animals.

Colossal humbug : Shaw has given him the name "B. B." which resembles "booby", meaning "a stupid or silly person". In his shape Shaw has drawn a satirical portrait of a fashionable doctor who has a charming personality and pleasant manners but who as a doctor is a colossal humbug.

(6) Cutler Walpole

Chloroform Surgeon : Cutler Walpole is a young and energetic surgeon. He is always certain about what he thinks or does or says. He is never in doubt. He is very well dressed and is very rich.

Before he comes to the stage Sir Patrick explains that he is one of the "Chloroform Surgeons". He has found out that

there is an organ in the body which we do not need. He has called it the "Nuciform Sac." and he charges 500 guineas to remove it. Because of the chloroform the patient does not feel any pain during the opration. The pain comes only after the surgeon has collected his cheque and gone.

The Nuciform Sac : Walpole has a panacea for all diseases. He thinks that all diseases are caused by blood poisoning and be cured by removing the patient's Nuciform Sac. That is his obsession and he applies it in all cases. When he hears that Ridgeon is not well he suggests to him that he should let him remove his Nuciform sac. Louis Dubedat's case also appears to him to be one of blood poisoning and he wants to remove his Nuciform Sac and when Louis is dying Walpole is sorry that he did not operate upon him. That was the only way to save him.

His blunders : He keeps on committing blunders and yet the patients get cured. B. B. sent him an opera singer for a throat operation because she had a growth on her vocal cords. Walpole did not touch her throat at all and only removed her Nuciform Sac. But she recovered her voice. In another case he operated upon a patient and found that she had no Nuciform Sac at all. He was so taken aback that he forgot to take the sponges out and was stitching them up inside her when the nurse missed them.

He thinks that only a surgeon can find out a patient's real trouble. A physician sees only the outside of the patient and so can find out nothing about him except in cases of skin diseases.

B. B.'s opinion : B. B. (quoting Kipling) calls him "an absent minded beggar," because when he starts operating on a patient he forgets what he has to operate upon and only removes the Nuciform Sac. B. B says, "The Niciform Sac is a shocking fraud. There is no such thing".

About walpole B. B. says, "Walpole has no intellect. A mere surgeon. Wonderful operator, but, after all, what is operating ? Only manual labour".

Attitude towards Dubedat : Walpole was charmed by Mrs. Dubedat's beauty when he saw her first outside Ridgeon's Consul-

ting Room. Dubedat tekes advantage of that to borrow money from him. He tells Walpole that his wife has taken a fancy to him and he should come and give her his company. Then he told him about his monetary difficulties. Walpole willingly lent him £ 20. Then he was shocked to find that he had tried the same trick on B. B. Dubedat also took away his gold cigarette case and pawned it. He also heard that Dubedat was a bigamist. So he regarded him as a blackguard and never changed his opinion. Even Dubedat's fine death did not move him. Just after his death he cracks a joke at his cost. When Sir Patrick says, "He is in another world now", Walpole says, "Borrowing his first five pound note there, probably".

Man of fixed opinions : Walpole is a man of fixed opinions. He is a good man and a good surgeon but the Nuciform Sac was his mania and he could not think of anything else.

(7) Dr. Blenkinsop

Dr. Blenkinsop was Ridgeon's class-fellow in the Medical College and he meets him thirty years later when he comes to congratulate him on his knighthood. He does not seem to have done well during these years. "He is flabby and shabby, cheaply fed and cheaply clothed". The lines on his face show that he has faced money troubles all his life.

In this play Blenkinsop is presented from two aspects—first as a private medical practitioner and then as a patient.

As a private doctor : As a private doctor Blenkinsop has proved to be utterly useless. He has not opened a book or a Journal for the last thirty years since he got his medical degree. He does not know what researches have been made during this period. He has no idea of the research of Dr. Ridgeon for which he has got his knighthood.

Blenkinsop has been practising among very poor people who could not afford to purchase medicines. He, therefore, has been giving one pound of ripe greengages every day half an hour before meals to all his patients irrespective of their diseases. Such a doctor is no doctor at all. And such a doctor can be very dangerous because a serious case requiring proper treatment may come to him and if he gives him only greengages the patient may die.

Blenkinsop says that he does not inspire confidence in his patients because he is not well himself. At this Ridgeon says, "The most tragic thing in the world is a sick doctor". And walpole says, "Yes, by George ! it's like a bald-headed man trying to sell a hair restorer."

Blenkinsop is very poor and so Ridgeon's wants to help him, But he refuses to borrow even a penny from anyone. However, he can accept Ridgeon's old clothes. Ridgeon is sorry to hear about this condition of his old friend.

Thus Blenkinsop, in spite of his poverty, has very great self-respect and independence of mind. If he does not have money for the Railway fare he prefers to walk. If he does not have an overcoat he wraps himself in brown paper. But he would not borrow a penny from anyone at all.

As a patient : Aftet the dinner at the Star and Garter at Richmond, Blenkinsop hears that Ridgeon has promised to cure Dubedat of tuberculosis. He asks him, "Can you cure that ?" Ridgeon replies, "I believe so". Then Blenkinsop says, "Then I wish you would cure me. My right lung is touched".

This puts Ridgeon on horns of a dilemma. He wants to undertake the treatment of a patient who is worth saving. He can take only one case and there are two candidates—Dubedat and Blenkinsop. He has to decide who is more worth saving. Should he save the life of Dubedat who is a promising artist but a rotten blackguard in matters of money and women, or that of Blenkinsop who is a good man but has no talent ?

Ridgeon does not face this moral dilemma in a straight manner. He chooses to cure Blenkinsop, not because he thinks his life more worth saving, but because he wants to get Dubedat killed so that he could marry his widow with whom he has fallen in love.

Dubedat dies and Blenkinsop is cured by the opsonin treatment. Towards the end of the play we are told by Jennifer that she had met Blenkinsop and he was looking the picture of health and strength and prosperity. He had been made a Medical officer of Health,

But up to the end he did not give up his style of treatment. He cured the Chairman of the Borough Council with a pound of ripe greengages.

Then Jennifer said that Blenkinsop had told her that private doctors were ignorant licensed murders. He must have said that on the basis of his own experience.

(8) The Newspaper Man

The Newspaper Man is a caricature of a press correspondent. There is no minimum qualification laid down for a person who wants to become a correspondent and he does not have to register himself anywhere. So many illiterate and incompetent persons become correspondents. The result is that newspapers are full of misleading reports. The correspondents are generally callous and take delight only in reporting deaths and disasters, rapes and murders. They pester all public man and are generally a nuisance. Their interviews do not clarify issues. They only create misunderstandings.

Stage Direction : Shaw's Stage Direction when he introduces the Newspaper Man is a masterpiece. "He is a young man who is disabled for ordinary business pursuits by a congenital erroneousness which renders him incapable of describing accurately anything he sees, or understanding or reporting accurately anything he hears. As the only employment in which these defects donot matter is journalism (for a newspaper, not having to act on its descriptions and reports. but only to sell them to idly curious people, has nothing but honour to lose by inaccuracy and unveracity), he has perforce become a journalist." He keeps a note-book but as he does not know shorthand and cannot write with ease in any hand, he does not write anything at all. Such an incompetent person is incapable of reporting anything accurately.

Comic Relief : Normally a dramatist would not have introduced such a ridiculous figure in a death scene. But Shaw was a jester. He could not keep up the tragic atmosphere for long. He wanted to provide some comic relief. And this the Newspaper Man provides as soon as he appears. When Walpole tells him that Louis is suffering from 'tubercle', he hears it as "cubicle". He does not know that tuberculosis is the same disease as consumption. He hears Ridgeon's name as "Pigeon". Walpole then snatches the note-book from him and writes down the names of the doctors himself.

Silly Question : He does not know what question to ask. He has been told that Dubedát is dying but he asks him about his

plans for the season. Louis gives a fine reply : "My plans for the season are very simple, I am going to die".

Complete misunderstanding : Jennifer is not in favour of Dubedat seeing the Newspaper Man. But Dubedat insists on seeing him because his death was a pose. He wanted that the brave way in which he faced death, the fine plans he had for his widow and his noble artistic creed, should all be reported in the press.

Louis Dubedat tells his wife that she should not mourn for him, should wear beautiful clothes and should remarry at the earliest. The Newspaper Man heard all this. But after Dubedat's death he tells Sir Ralph, "I thought it showed a very nice feeling, his being so particular about his wife going into proper mourning for him and making her promise never to marry again." Lack of understanding could not go farther than this :

Just after Dubedat's death he wants to ask Mrs. Dubedat "How it Feels to be a Widow". B. B. tells him that if he waits until Mrs. Dubedat comes back, he will be able to write an article on "How It Feels to be Turned Out of the House". Thus he is driven out of the studio.

Highly Exaggerated : Thus the picture of the Newspaper Man is highly exaggerated. But it represents Shaw's profound contempt for the ordinary newspaper correspondents who pester important personalities, report things wrongly and are only interested in spreading sensations and reporting deaths and disasters.

(9) Redpenny

Redpenny is a medical student and is a sort of apprentice to Dr. Ridgeon. He acts as his domestic laboratory assistant, looks after his correspondence and does other small , miscellaneous jobs. "He is a wide-open-eyed, ready, credulous, friendly, hasty youth, with his hair and clothes in reluctant transition from the untidy boy to the tidy doctor." His Christian name is unknown "and of no importance",

Redpenny remains always busy and shouts at Emmy whenever she comes to disturb him in the course of her cleaning work. He remains so busy in his work that he has no time even to read the morning papers. Everyone knows that a knighthood has been conferred on Ridgeon but he does not know about it. He gets this information from Emmy.

He is treated very badly by his own boss, Sir Colenso Ridgeon. When he tells him that "Old Paddy Cullen" had come to congratulate him, Ridgeon shouts at him : "who taught you to speak of Sir Patrick Cullen as "Old Paddy Cullen", *you young ruffian* ?" When Redpenny says that in St. Anne's Hospital they all call him "Old Colly Ridgeon", he says, "That is what makes the medical student the most disgusting figure in modern civilization. No veneration, no manners".

When Sir Patrick wants to ask him to leave the room, he shouts at him ; "young man : get out".

Before Ridgeon allows Mrs. Dubedat to come in he tells Redpenny that if she has not gone in five minutes, he should come in with an urgent call for him from the hospital. That will be a hint for her to leave. But when Mrs. Dubedat comes in Redgeon is charmed by her and wants her to stay. So when Redpenny actually comes to tell him about the supposed case, Ridgeon only shouts at him, "Oh, nonsense : get out. What do you mean by interrupting me like this ?".

We only pity poor Redpenny !

(10) Emmy

Emmy is the old maid-servant of Dr. Ridgeon.

Shaw's description of Emmy in his Stage Directions is a masterpiece of wit and humour. He says that she "has never known the cares, the preoccupations, the responsibilities, jealousies and anxieties of personal beauty. She has the complexion of a never-washed gypsy, incurable by any detergent ; and she has, not a regular beard and moustaches, which could at least be trimmed and waxed into masculine presentableness, but a whole crop of small beards and moustaches, mostly springing from moles all over her face.".

But has her ugliness been a disadvantage ? No. It has served her better than the beauty of other women. Shaw says, "She has used her ugliness to secure indulgences unattainable by Cleopatra or Fair Rosamund, and has the further great advantage over them that age increases her qualification instead of impairing it......She is a walking sermon on the vanity of feminine prettiness."

Dr. Ridgeon is fifty years old and has just been knighted but Emmy treats him as an old family nurse treats a child who has just learnt to walk. Notice the following dialogue :

Emmy : Have you finished your two eggs, sonny ?

Ridgeon : Yes.

Emmy ; Have you put on your clean vest ?

Ridgeon : Yes.

Emmy : That my ducky diamond ! Now keep yourself tidy and dont go messing about and dirtying your hands : the people are coming to congratulate you.

She knows that Ridgeon is put in good humour by beautiful women. That is why she insists that he should see Mrs. Dubedat.

She makes very shrewd comments on doctors. She says, "I know what doctors are : sitting talking together about themselves when they ought to be with their poor patients. Ridgeon refuses to see Mrs. Dubedat who has come for a cure but he is spending hours in social talk with the other doctors. Bearing this in mind she asks him, "Will you see Mr. Cutler Walpole ? He dont want a cure : he only wants to congratulate you".

She takes liberties even with very senior doctors like Sir Patrick Cullen. She boldly suggests to him that he must leave because his horses are getting restless in the draught. When Sir Patrick calls her "old Catamaran", she replies back, "Come, come, now ! none of your temper to me. And it is time for Colly to get to his work". When Ridgeon says to her, "Behave yourself, Emmy. Get out, "she says, "Oh, I learnt how to behave myself before I learnt you to do it". While going Sir Patrick tells Emmy, "you are an ugly old devil, and no mistake". She at once replies back "you are no beauty yourself".

She creates humour by announcing Dr. Schutzmacher as "Dr. Shoemaker".

Emmy has frequent fits of bad temper but is "an industrious, agreeable and popular old soul". Dr. Ridgeon cannot do without her.

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OPINIONS OF FAMOUS CRITICS

Ridgeon's motives

One of the most curious things about the play is that the motive which made Ridgeon resolve to sacrifice Dubedat and save the worthy Blenkinsop instead, is never made clear. Did he do so because he thought with Sir Patrick that a good man was more important than a painter of good pictures, or because he wanted to marry Dubedat's wife, or because he wanted to save her from the shock of finding out sooner or later what a poor creature her king of men really was? Probably, all the three motives actuated him. His last words when he discovers that Jennifer has married again are : "Then I have committed a purely disinterested murder." The point of the play, therefore, is not the solution of the problem whether a good man is more worth preserving than a good artist who is a rascal. The play is an absorbing story with plenty of capital satire on medical profession thrown in. —*Desmond Macarthy*.

Shaw's views on vaccination and vivisection

Mr. Barnal praises Shaw for exposing the absurdities of the period of the early enthusiasm and excesses of the germ theory, where scientists as much as doctors took Pasteur's work as divine revelation and thought that all disease was due to germs. Regarding vivisection Mr. Barnal says :

(i) "It is certainly also true that the greater proportion of animal experiments—as the greater propotion of all experiments prove nothing."

(ii) "If we had to learn science all over again from the start we could undoubtedly do it in a far humane way."

(iii) "If all men and all scientists were ideally wise and honourable they might have discovered what they have discoured without recourse to any animal experiments"

The medical profession

"Of all the social institutions which have moved Shaw to laughter, none has given him greater amusement than the medical profession which he looks upon as a vested interest in ill-health The vital force is unseen, intangible; it follows its own laws. Medical Science can deal with the physical organs but the vital principle always eludes its grasp. The pretensions of this branch of witchcraft, which passes itself as a science, are infinite. All its researches and conclusions are blunders and the specialization of a doctor means the acquisition of a mania.

"The conference of doctor in *The Doctor's Dilemma* is a pandemonium of monomaniacs.........They are, all of them, almost equally right or equally in the wrong. There is no scientific and logical explanation for all the blundering successes and failures of the medical profession."

"Doctors deal in disease and from thinkering at life have lost all sense of its sacredness. These irreligious men regard every human life, not as the embodiment of the Eternal Will but as a mere case on which they can carry on their experiments".

—A. C. Ward.

What is goodness ?

"We can conceive of Goodness as an abstract virtue, as the ancient Greek philosopher did, yet in common human experience no man or woman embodies Goodness without some qualification or dilution or blemish imposed by the limitations and inadequacies of human nature. Even a saint, a holy man—if he is truly a man and not a god—is only Good within the limits he imposes upon himself by withdrawing from the total experience of human life : he does not attain pure Goodness but only an approximation to it. The ideal Good Man is an imagined person who attains perfection in all things of which human creatures are capable. But no such person exists or has existed or can exist. Our expectations of individual goodness have, therefore, to be narrowed down to some particular good or combination of particular good, and sooner or later we all encounter some form of the problem which faces Sir Colenso Ridgeon, though most of us do not encounter it in his critical form. The decision he makes, and any decision we may make in other circumstances, cannot fail to be hampered by imperfect knowledge of the true nature of Goodness as it exists in (to use convenient language) the mind of God. And

if it is beyond human power to achieve more than fragments of that total Goodness, how are we to decide which fragment is more worthy than any other. Though we may feel or suppose that moral goodness is superior to artistic goodness, that it is better to conform to accepted local standards of decent social conduct than to defy or ignore those standards while creating great works of art, we cannot in any final or absolute sense know that it is so. Great works of art influence multitudes of people in many countries throughout centuries ; virtuous social conduct by an individual person may have only a narrowly limited and temporary influence. Nevertheless, if we were all great artists and at the same time all mean scoundrels (as Dubedat is) the world would be impossible to live in, for all social virtues would vanish; whereas if we were all virtuous within our own narrow social environment (as Blenkinsop is) the world would be at least tolerable, though without great art mankind would be spiritually and intellectually crippled. There is, of course, no rule of life which compels a great artist to be a bad citizen, though it does frequently happen that artists are in some degree anti-social, or even worse (in the opinion of many others), because art tends to be an all-absorbing activity which closes the artists's eyes to commoner and distracting duties. —*A. C. Ward.*

The dilemma is absurd

The actual story of *The Doctor's Dilemma* itself seems to me less poignant and important than the things with which Shaw had lately been dealing. First of all, as has been said, Shaw has neither the kind of justice nor the kind of weakness that goes to make a true problem. We cannot feel the Doctor's Dilemma, because we cannot really fancy Bernard Shaw being in a dilemma. His mind is both fond of abruptness and fond of finality ; he always makes up his mind when he knows the facts and sometimes before. Moreover, this particular problem (though Shaw is certainly, as we shall see, nearer to pure doubt about it than about anything else) does not strike the critic as being such an exasperating problem after all. An artist of vast power and promise, who is also a scamp of vast profligacy and treachery, has a chance of life if specially treated for a special disease. The modern doctors (and even the modern dramatists) are in doubt whether he should be specially favoured because he is aesthetically important or specially disregarded because he is ethically anti-social. They see-saw between the two despicable modern doctrines, one that geniuses

should be worshipped like idols and the other that criminals should be merely wiped out like germs. That both clever men and bad men ought to be treated like men does not seem to occur to them. As a matter of fact, in these affairs of life and death one never does think of such distinctions. Nobody does shout out at sea, "Bad citizen overboard." I should recommed the doctor in his dilemma to do exactly what I am sure any decent doctor would do without any dilemma at all : to treat the man simply as a man. *—G. K. Chesterton.*

The ideal—a public health service

"In that extravagant world of which I dream, in which everyone will have a chance of being happy—in that impossible world all doctors will be members of one great organization for the public health, with all or most of their income guaranteed to them......I am convinced that the services a general practioner is able to render are not one-tenth so effectual as they might be if, instead of his being a private adventurer, he were a member of a sanely organized public machine. But my dream of a public health service, though socialistic, is utopian. Under our present system of competitive scramble which has reduced medical practice to mere fee-hunting, nothing of this sort is possible."

—H. G. Wells.

The faults of professional organizations

Nothing excites Shaw's indignation, nothing more surely provokes his sarcasm than the tendency of all professional organisations to regard the profession, the means, as more important than the end which the means are designed to serve. The doctor who thinks of the disease rather than of the patient sacrifices the spirit to the letter, the substance to the shadow, the end to the means, the purpose to the instrument. Such is, indeed, the besetting vice of all professional organizations who first devise an elaborate ritual for their profession and then proceed to invest it with an almost mystical significance in order to deter non professionals from entering the hallowed portals. "Amateurs will be prosecuted"—such are the slogans by means of which professional organizations seek to enhance the privileges and incidentally to increase the emoluments of the profession. *—C. E. M. Joad.*

Defects

Some of Shaw's plays are poor as drama because they do not satisfy the minimum condition that every work of art has to ful-

fil : they do not correctly and adequately represent their author's philosophy.

The inadequacy is most glaringly apparent in his 'tragedy', *The Doctor's Dilemma*. As a socialist Shaw knows that diseases are generally caused by poverty and overwork and he also holds that it is the duty of society to cure them by introducing socialism. His first two recipes are :

(i) Nothing is more dangerous than a poor doctor : not even a poor employer or a poor landlord.

(ii) Of all the anti-social vested interests the worst is the vested interest in ill-health.

Having approached the question from a socialistic point of view he has come to the conclusion that the best way to keep healthy is to be well born and well brought up and to make the doctor a civil servant with a respectable living wage paid out of public funds.

In the drama Shaw fences with the problem rather than face it openly and boldly. A poor doctor is, according to him, the most dangerous thing on earth, because he has to live on the diseases of others and also to invent and prescribe medicines even when these are unnecessary. But the poor doctor, Blenkinsop, is the most harmless and least dangerous of all the characters in this play. Indeed he appears here not as a doctor but as a patient. He is not only a harmless patient but also a very honest, and useful member of society. He might have been a poor Post Office clerk or a poor schoolmaster or anything else, provided that he was poor, useful and honest. The doctor's dilemma is to choose between a rascally man of genius and an honest, useful citizen, and it is immaterial from which particular classes these men are drawn. —*Beatrice Webb.*

The part of Louis Dubedat

Dubedat is an arresting and interesting figure but he is introduced into the play only incidental by and then he and his wife usurp a space which is out of all proportion to the part they were meant to play in the story.

The first Act is a comedy of doctors but in the second half of the play Louis is the one dominant-figure and throws all others into the shade. Shaw is so much amused by his villainy that he forgets the doctors whom he originally introduced as the principal

characters in his drama. There are, no doubt, characters (Parson Adams, for example) who were originally meant to play a subordinate part but become later on the principal figures in the works in which they appear, but it is not so with Louis Dubedat. To the last he remains an incidental figure in a drama of doctors and their follies. But Shaw having failed to make an effective drama out of the main problem, tries to render it interesting by introducing this rascal who sports with the moral convictions on which modern society is based. It is an amusing episode, no doubt; but it does not make up for the poverty of the drama as a whole.

—*Caudwell.*

The confusion

H. W. Wells is said to have accused Shaw of indolence over fundamentals. That indolence would account for the confusion in this play. Shaw just skims over the real problem of poverty and disease and confines himself to the exposure of trivialities. He wants to write serious comic dramas, but here he has produced a serious preface and a comical drama. The most important things in the play are the caricature of individual doctors and the picture of the brilliant rascality of an individual patient. Shaw has shown that all the celebrated doctors are, both scientifically and practically considered, blundering idiots ; but he does not show how in a rotten social system all these honest, decent, well-meaning gentlemen are gradually reduced to colossal humbugs when they begin to trade on the diseases of others.

—*A. C. Ward.*

Louis Dubedat

He is openly immoral. His creed is the creed of undisturbed enjoyment of life, and he believes in it with the innocence of a child and the conviction of a philosopher. He may be guilty of bigamy and felony, but all his misdeeds are perpetrated with an open-hearted good humour, which even Falstaff might have envied. He is surrounded by men who lend him money and confront him with charges of criminality. But their charges are charges of conventional morality and have therefore no weight with a man who is free from the bondage of convention. His high spirits rise above their accusations ; his resourcefulness is inexhaustible. He has arguments t› defend all his actions and sometimes beats them with reasons derived from the same social

morality which they believe in but by which he is absolutely uninfluenced. When they abuse his confidence, he accuses them of treachery, but when they charge him with having trifled with the affections of two innocent girls, he meets them with arguments drawn from his own aesthetic philosophy of life. There is a combination of childlike ingenuousness and acute ingenuity in many of Shaw's creations......It is the source of a comedy that is peculiarly Shavian. This comedy has an element of wit because the men who are the source of the comic are all brilliant, original talkers; it has also an element of humour, because they have the simplicity and naivete of children.

—Beatrice Webb.

19
PREFACE ON DOCTORS

IT is not the fault of our doctors that the medical service of the community, as at present provided for, is a murderous absurdity. That any sane nation, having observed that you could provide for the supply of bread by giving bakers a pecuniary interest in baking for you, should go on to give a surgeon a pecuniary interest in cutting off your leg, is enough to make one despair of political humanity. But that is precisely what we have done. And the more appalling the mutilation, the more the mutilator is paid. He who corrects the ingrowing toe-nail receives a few shillings: he who cuts your inside out receives hundreds of guineas, except when he does it to a poor person for practice.

Scandalized voices murmur that these operations are necessary. They may be. It may also be necessary to hang a man or pull down a house. But we take good care not to make the hangman and the housebreaker the judges of that. If we did, no man's neck would be safe and no man's house stable. But we do make the doctor the judge, and fine him anything from sixpence to several hundred guineas if he decides in our favor. I cannot knock my shins severely without forcing on some surgeon the difficult question, "Could I not make a better use of a pocketful of guineas than this man is making of his leg? Could he not write as well—or even better—on one leg than on two? And the guineas would make all the difference in the world to me just now. My wife—my pretty ones—the leg may mortify—it is always safer to operate—he will be well in a fortnight—artificial legs are now so well made that they are really better than natural ones—evolution is towards motors and leglessness, &c., &c., &c."

Now there is no calculation that an engineer can make as to the behavior of a girder under a strain, or an astronomer as to the recurrence of a comet, more certain than the calculation

that under such circumstances we shall be dismembered unnecessarily in all directions by surgeons who believe the operations to be necessary solely because they want to perform them. The process metaphorically called bleeding the rich man is performed not only metaphorically but literally every day by surgeons who are quite as honest as most of us. After all, what harm is there in it? The surgeon need not take off the rich man's (or woman's) leg or arm: he can remove the appendix or the uvula, and leave the patient none the worse after a fortnight or so in bed, whilst the nurse, the general practitioner, the apothecary, and the surgeon will be the better.

Doubtful Character borne by the Medical Profession

Again I hear the voices indignantly muttering old phrases about the high character of a noble profession and the honor and conscience of its members. I must reply that the medical profession has not a high character; it has an infamous character. I do not know a single thoughtful and well-informed person who does not feel that the tragedy of illness at present is that it delivers you helplessly into the hands of a profession which you deeply mistrust, because it not only advocates and practises the most revolting cruelties in the pursuit of knowledge, and justifies them on grounds which would equally justify practising the same cruelties on yourself or your children, or burning down London to test a patent fire extinguisher, but, when it has shocked the public, tries to reassure it with lies of breath-bereaving brazenness. That is the character the medical profession has got just now. It may be deserved or it may not: there it is at all events: and the doctors who have not realized this are living in a fool's paradise. As to the honor and conscience of doctors, they have as much as any other class of men, no more and no less. And what other men dare pretend to be impartial where they have a strong pecuniary interest on one side?

Nobody supposes that doctors are less virtuous than judges; but a judge whose salary and reputation depended on whether the verdict was for plaintiff or defendant, prosecutor or prisoner, would be as little trusted as a general in the pay of the enemy. To offer me a doctor as my judge, and then weight his decision with a bribe of a large sum of money and a virtual guarantee that if he makes a mistake it can never be proved against him, is to go wildly beyond the ascertained strain which human nature will bear. It is simply unscientific to allege or believe that doctors do not under existing circumstances perform unnecessary operations and manufacture and prolong lucrative illness. The only ones who can claim to be above suspicion are those who are so much sought after that their cured patients are immediately replaced by fresh ones. And there is this curious psychological fact to the remembered: a serious illness or a death advertizes the doctor exactly as a hanging advertizes the barrister who defended the person hanged. Suppose, for example, a royal personage gets something wrong with his throat, or has a pain in his inside. If a doctor effects some trumpery cure with a wet compress or a peppermint lozenge nobody takes the least notice of him. But if he operates on the throat and kills the patient, or extirpates an internal organ and keeps the whole nation palpitating for days whilst the patient hovers in pain and fever between life and death, his fortune is made: every rich man who omits to call him in when the same symptoms appear in his household is held not to have done his utmost duty to the patient. The wonder is that there is a king or queen left alive in Europe.

Doctors' Consciences

There is another difficulty in trusting to the honor and conscience of a doctor. Doctors are just like other Englishmen: most of them have no honor and no conscience: what they commonly mistake for these is sentimentality and an intense

dread of doing anything that everybody else does not do, or omitting to do anything that everybody else does. This of course does amount to a sort of working or rule-of-thumb conscience; but it means that you will do anything, good or bad, provided you get enough people to keep you in countenance by doing it also. It is the sort of conscience that makes it possible to keep order on a pirate ship, or in a troop of brigands. It may be said that in the last analysis there is no other sort of honor or conscience in existence—that the assent of the majority is the only sanction known to ethics. No doubt this holds good in political practice. If mankind knew the facts, and agreed with the doctors, then the doctors would be in the right; and any person who thought otherwise would be a lunatic. But mankind does not agree, and does not know the facts. All that can be said for medical popularity is that until there is a practicable alternative to blind trust in the doctor, the truth about the doctor is so terrible that we dare not face it. Molière saw through the doctors; but he had to call them in just the same. Napoleon had no illusions about them; but he had to die under their treatment just as much as the most credulous ignoramus that ever paid sixpence for a bottle of strong medicine. In this predicament most people, to save themselves from unbearable mistrust and misery, or from being driven by their conscience into actual conflict with the law, fall back on the old rule that if you cannot have what you believe in you must believe in what you have. When your child is ill or your wife dying, and you happen to be very fond of them, or even when, if you are not fond of them, you are human enough to forget every personal grudge before the spectacle of a fellow creature in pain or peril, what you want is comfort, reassurance, something to clutch at, were it but a straw. This the doctor brings you. You have a wildly urgent feeling that something must be done; and the doctor does something. Sometimes what he does kills the patient; but you do not know that; and the doctor assures you that all that human skill could do has

been done. And nobody has the brutality to say to the newly bereft father, mother, husband, wife, brother, or sister, "You have killed your lost darling by your credulity."

The Peculiar People

Besides, the calling in of the doctor is now compulsory except in cases where the patient is an adult and not too ill to decide the steps to be taken. We are subject to prosecution for manslaughter or for criminal neglect if the patient dies without the consolations of the medical profession. This menace is kept before the public by the Peculiar People. The Peculiars, as they are called, have gained their name by believing that the Bible is infallible, and taking their belief quite seriously. The Bible is very clear as to the treatment of illness. The Epistle of James, chapter v., contains the following explicit directions:—

> 14. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:
>
> 15. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

The Peculiars obey these instructions and dispense with doctors. They are therefore prosecuted for manslaughter when their children die.

When I was a young man, the Peculiars were usually acquitted. The prosecution broke down when the doctor in the witness box was asked whether, if the child had had medical attendance, it would have lived. It was, of course, impossible for any man of sense and honor to assume divine omniscience by answering this in the affirmative, or indeed pretending to be able to answer it at all. And on this the judge had to instruct the jury that they must acquit the prisoner. Thus a judge with a keen sense of law (a very rare phenomenon on the Bench, by the way) was spared the

possibility of having to sentence one prisoner (under the Blasphemy Laws) for questioning the authority of Scripture, and another for ignorantly and superstitiously accepting it as a guide to conduct. Today all this is changed. The doctor never hesitates to claim divine omniscience, nor to clamor for laws to punish any scepticism on the part of laymen. A modern doctor thinks nothing of signing the death certificate of one of his own diphtheria patients, and then going into the witness box and swearing a Peculiar into prison for six months by assuring the jury, on oath, that if the prisoner's child, dead of diphtheria, had been placed under his treatment instead of that of St James, it would not have died. And he does so not only with impunity, but with public applause, though the logical course would be to prosecute him either for the murder of his own patient, or for perjury in the case of St James. Yet no barrister, apparently, dreams of asking for the statistics of the relative case-mortality in diphtheria among the Peculiars and among the believers in doctors, on which alone any valid opinion could be founded. The barrister is as superstitious as the doctor is infatuated; and the Peculiar goes unpitied to his cell, though nothing whatever has been proved except that his child died without the interference of a doctor as effectually as any of the hundreds of children who die every day of the same diseases in the doctor's care.

Recoil of the Dogma of Medical Infallibility on the Doctor

On the other hand, when the doctor is in the dock, or is the defendant in an action for malpractices, he has to struggle against the inevitable result of his former pretences to infinite knowledge and unerring skill. He has taught the jury and the judge, and even his own counsel, to believe that every doctor can, with a glance at the tongue, a touch on the pulse, and a reading of the clinical thermometer, diagnose with

absolute certainty a patient's complaint, also that on dissecting a dead body he can infallibly put his finger on the cause of death, and, in cases where poisoning is suspected, the nature of the poison used. Now all this supposed exactness and infallibility is imaginary; and to treat a doctor as if his mistakes were necessarily malicious or corrupt malpractices (an inevitable deduction from the postulate that the doctor, being omniscient, cannot make mistakes) is as unjust as to blame the nearest apothecary for not being prepared to supply you with sixpenny-worth of the elixir of life, or the nearest motor garage for not having perpetual motion on sale in gallon tins. But if apothecaries and motor car makers habitually advertized elixir of life and perpetual motion, and succeeded in creating a strong general belief that they could supply it, they would find themselves in an awkward position if they were indicted for allowing a customer to die, or for burning a chauffeur by putting petrol into his car. That is the predicament the doctor finds himself in when he has to defend himself against a charge of malpractice by a plea of ignorance and fallibility. His plea is received with flat incredulity; and he gets little sympathy, even from laymen who know, because he has brought the incredulity on himself. If he escapes, he can only do so by opening the eyes of the jury to the facts that medical science is as yet very imperfectly differentiated from common curemongering witchcraft; that diagnosis, though it means in many instances (including even the identification of pathogenic bacilli under the microscope) only a choice among terms so loose that they would not be accepted as definitions in any really exact science, is, even at that, an uncertain and difficult matter on which doctors often differ; and that the very best medical opinion and treatment varies widely from doctor to doctor, one practitioner prescribing six or seven scheduled poisons for so familiar a disease as enteric fever where another will not tolerate drugs at all; one starving a patient whom another would stuff; one urging an operation which another would regard as

unnecessary and dangerous; one giving alcohol and meat which another would sternly forbid, &c., &c., &c.: all these discrepancies arising not between the opinion of good doctors and bad ones (the medical contention is, of course, that a bad doctor is an impossiblity), but between practitioners of equal eminence and authority. Usually it is impossible to persuade the jury that these facts are facts. Juries seldom notice facts; and they have been taught to regard any doubts of the omniscience and omnipotence of doctors as blasphemy. Even the fact that doctors themselves die of the very diseases they profess to cure passes unnoticed. We do not shoot out our lips and shake our heads, saying, "They save others: themselves they cannot save": their reputation stands, like an African king's palace, on a foundation of dead bodies; and the result is that the verdict goes against the defendant when the defendant is a doctor accused of malpractice.

Fortunately for the doctors, they very seldom find themselves in this position, because it is so difficult to prove anything against them. The only evidence that can decide a case of malpractice is expert evidence: that is, the evidence of other doctors; and every doctor will allow a colleague to decimate a whole countryside sooner than violate the bond of professional etiquet by giving him away. It is the nurse who gives the doctor away in private, because every nurse has some particular doctor whom she likes; and she usually assures her patients that all the others are disastrous noodles, and soothes the tedium of the sick-bed by gossip about their blunders. She will even give a doctor away for the sake of making the patient believe that she knows more than the doctor. But she dare not, for her livelihood, give the doctor away in public. And the doctors stand by one another at all costs. Now and then some doctor in an unassailable position, like the late Sir William Gull, will go into the witness box and say what he really thinks about the way a patient has been treated; but such behavior is considered little short of infamous by his colleagues.

Why Doctors do not Differ

The truth is, there would never be any public agreement among doctors if they did not agree to agree on the main point of the doctor being always in the right. Yet the two guinea man never thinks that the five shilling man is right: if he did, he would be understood as confessing to an overcharge of £1:17s.; and on the same ground the five shilling man cannot encourage the notion that the owner of the sixpenny surgery round the corner is quite up to his mark. Thus even the layman has to be taught that infallibility is not quite infallible, because there are two qualities of it to be had at two prices.

But there is no agreement even in the same rank at the same price. During the first great epidemic of influenza towards the end of the nineteenth century a London evening paper sent round a journalist-patient to all the great consultants of that day, and published their advice and prescriptions: a proceeding passionately denounced by the medical papers as a breach of confidence of these eminent physicians. The case was the same; but the prescriptions were different, and so was the advice. Now a doctor cannot think his own treatment right and at the same time think his colleague right in prescribing a different treatment when the patient is the same. Anyone who has ever known doctors well enough to hear medical shop talked without reserve knows that they are full of stories about each other's blunders and errors, and that the theory of their omniscience and omnipotence no more holds good among themselves than it did with Molière and Napoleon. But for this very reason no doctor dare accuse another of malpractice. He is not sure enough of his own opinion to ruin another man by it. He knows that if such conduct were tolerated in his profession no doctor's livelihood or reputation would be worth a year's purchase. I do not blame him: I should do the same myself. But the effect of this state of things is to make the medical

profession a conspiracy to hide its own shortcomings. No doubt the same may be said of all professions. They are all conspiracies against the laity; and I do not suggest that the medical conspiracy is either better or worse than the military conspiracy, the legal conspiracy, the sacerdotal conspiracy, the pedagogic conspiracy, the royal and aristocratic conspiracy, the literary and artistic conspiracy, and the innumerable industrial, commercial, and financial conspiracies, from the trade unions to the great exchanges, which make up the huge conflict which we call society. But it is less suspected. The Radicals who used to advocate, as an indispensable preliminary to social reform, the strangling of the last king with the entrails of the last priest, substituted compulsory vaccination for compulsory baptism without a murmur.

The Craze for Operations

Thus everything is on the side of the doctor. When men die of disease they are said to die from natural causes. When they recover (and they mostly do) the doctor gets the credit of curing them. In surgery all operations are recorded as successful if the patient can be got out of the hospital or nursing home alive, though the subsequent history of the case may be such as would make an honest surgeon vow never to recommend or perform the operation again. The large range of operations which consist of amputating limbs and extirpating organs admits of no direct verification of their necessity. There is a fashion in operations as there is in sleeves and skirts: the triumph of some surgeon who has at last found out how to make a once desperate operation fairly safe is usually followed by a rage for that operation not only among the doctors, but actually among their patients. There are men and women whom the operating table seems to fascinate: half-alive people who through vanity, or hypochondria, or a craving to be the constant

objects of anxious attention or what not, lose such feeble sense as they ever had of the value of their own organs and limbs. They seem to care as little for mutilation as lobsters or lizards, which at least have the excuse that they grow new claws and new tails if they lose the old ones. Whilst this book was being prepared for the press a case was tried in the Courts, of a man who sued a railway company for damages because a train had run over him and amputated both his legs. He lost his case because it was proved that he had deliberately contrived the occurrence himself for the sake of getting an idler's pension at the expense of the railway company, being too dull to realize how much more he had to lose than to gain by the bargain even if he had won his case and received damages above his utmost hopes.

This amazing case makes it possible to say, with some prospect of being believed, that there is in the classes who can afford to pay for fashionable operations a sprinkling of persons so incapable of appreciating the relative importance of preserving their bodily integrity (including the capacity for parentage) and the pleasure of talking about themselves and hearing themselves talked about as the heroes and heroines of sensational operations, that they tempt surgeons to operate on them not only with huge fees, but with personal solicitation. Now it cannot be too often repeated that when an operation is once performed, nobody can ever prove that it was unnecessary. If I refuse to allow my leg to be amputated, its mortification and my death may prove that I was wrong; but if I let the leg go, nobody can ever prove that it would not have mortified had I been obstinate. Operation is therefore the safe side for the surgeon as well as the lucrative side. The result is that we hear of "conservative surgeons" as a distinct class of practitioners who make it a rule not to operate if they can possibly help it, and who are sought after by the people who have vitality enough to regard an operation as a last resort. But no surgeon is bound to take the conservative view. If he

believes that an organ is at best a useless survival, and that if he extirpates it the patient will be well and none the worse in a fortnight, whereas to await the natural cure would mean a month's illness, then he is clearly justified in recommending the operation even if the cure without operation is as certain as anything of the kind ever can be. Thus the conservative surgeon and the radical or extirpatory surgeon may both be right as far as the ultimate cure is concerned; so that their consciences do not help them out of their differences.

Credulity and Chloroform

There is no harder scientific fact in the world than the fact that belief can be produced in practically unlimited quantity and intensity, without observation or reasoning, and even in defiance of both, by the simple desire to believe founded on a strong interest in believing. Everybody recognizes this in the case of the amatory infatuations of the adolescents who see angels and heroes in obviously (to others) commonplace and even objectionable maidens and youths. But it holds good over the entire field of human activity. The hardest-headed materialist will become a consulter of table-rappers and slate-writers if he loses a child or a wife so beloved that the desire to revive and communicate with them becomes irresistible. The cobbler believes that there is nothing like leather. The Imperialist who regards the conquest of England by a foreign power as the worst of political misfortunes believes that the conquest of a foreign power by England would be a boon to the conquered. Doctors are no more proof against such illusions than other men. Can anyone then doubt that under existing conditions a great deal of unnecessary and mischievous operating is bound to go on, and that patients are encouraged to imagine that modern surgery and anaesthesia have made operations much less serious matters than they really are?

When doctors write or speak to the public about operations, they imply, and often say in so many words, that chloroform has made surgery painless. People who have been operated on know better. The patient does not feel the knife, and the operation is therefore enormously facilitated for the surgeon; but the patient pays for the anaesthesia with hours of wretched sickness; and when that is over there is the pain of the wound made by the surgeon, which has to heal like any other wound. This is why operating surgeons, who are usually out of the house with their fee in their pockets before the patient has recovered consciousness, and who therefore see nothing of the suffering witnessed by the general practitioner and the nurse, occasionally talk of operations very much as the hangman in Barnaby Rudge talked of executions, as if being operated on were a luxury in sensation as well as in price.

MEDICAL POVERTY

To make matters worse, doctors are hideously poor. The Irish gentleman doctor of my boyhood, who took nothing less than a guinea, though he might pay you four visits for it, seems to have no equivalent nowadays in English society. Better be a railway porter than an ordinary English general practitioner. A railway porter has from eighteen to twenty-three shillings a week from the Company merely as a retainer; and his additional fees from the public, if we leave the third-class twopenny tip out of account (and I am by no means sure that even this reservation need be made), are equivalent to doctor's fees in the case of second-class passengers, and double doctor's fees in the case of first. Any class of educated men thus treated tends to become a brigand class, and doctors are no exception to the rule. They are offered disgraceful prices for advice and medicine. Their patients are for the most part so poor and so ignorant that good advice would be resented as impracticable and

wounding. When you are so poor that you cannot afford to refuse eighteenpence from a man who is too poor to pay you more, it is useless to tell him that what he or his sick child needs is not medicine, but more leisure, better clothes, better food, and a better drained and ventilated house. It is kinder to give him a bottle of something almost as cheap as water, and tell him to come again with another eighteenpence if it does not cure him. When you have done that over and over again every day for a week, how much scientific conscience have you left? If you are weak-minded enough to cling desperately to your eighteenpence as denoting a certain social superiority to the sixpenny doctor, you will be miserably poor all your life; whilst the sixpenny doctor, with his low prices and quick turnover of patients, visibly makes much more than you do and kills no more people.

A doctor's character can no more stand out against such conditions than the lungs of his patients can stand out against bad ventilation. The only way in which he can preserve his self-respect is by forgetting all he ever learnt of science, and clinging to such help as he can give without cost merely by being less ignorant and more accustomed to sick-beds than his patients. Finally, he acquires a certain skill at nursing cases under poverty-stricken domestic conditions, just as women who have been trained as domestic servants in some huge institution with lifts, vacuum cleaners, electric lighting, steam heating, and machinery that turns the kitchen into a laboratory and engine house combined, manage, when they are sent out into the world to drudge as general servants, to pick up their business in a new way, learning the slatternly habits and wretched makeshifts of homes where even bundles of kindling wood are luxuries to be anxiously economized.

The Successful Doctor

The doctor whose success blinds public opinion to medical

poverty is almost as completely demoralized. His promotion means that his practice becomes more and more confined to the idle rich. The proper advice for most of their ailments is typified in Abernethy's "Live on sixpence a day and earn it." But here, as at the other end of the scale, the right advice is neither agreeable nor practicable. And every hypochondriacal rich lady or gentleman who can be persuaded that he or she is a lifelong invalid means anything from fifty to five hundred pounds a year for the doctor. Operations enable a surgeon to earn similar sums in a couple of hours; and if the surgeon also keeps a nursing home, he may make considerable profits at the same time by running what is the most expensive kind of hotel. These gains are so great that they undo much of the moral advantage which the absence of grinding pecuniary anxiety gives the rich doctor over the poor one. It is true that the temptation to prescribe a sham treatment because the real treatment is too dear for either patient or doctor does not exist for the rich doctor. He always has plenty of genuine cases which can afford genuine treatment; and these provide him with enough sincere scientific professional work to save him from the ignorance, obsolescence, and atrophy of scientific conscience into which his poorer colleagues sink. But on the other hand his expenses are enormous. Even as a bachelor, he must, at London west end rates, make over a thousand a year before he can afford even to insure his life. His house, his servants, and his equipage (or autopage) must be on the scale to which his patients are accustomed, though a couple of rooms with a camp bed in one of them might satisfy his own requirements. Above all, the income which provides for these outgoings stops the moment he himself stops working. Unlike the man of business, whose managers, clerks, warehousemen and laborers keep his business going whilst he is in bed or in his club, the doctor cannot earn a farthing by deputy. Though he is exceptionally exposed to infection, and has to face all weathers at all hours of the night and day, often not

enjoying a complete night's rest for a week, the money stops coming in the moment he stops going out; and therefore illness has special terrors for him, and success no certain permanence. He dare not stop making hay while the sun shines; for it may set at any time. Men do not resist pressure of this intensity. When they come under it as doctors they pay unnecessary visits; they write prescriptions that are as absurd as the rub of chalk with which an Irish tailor once charmed away a wart from my father's finger; they conspire with surgeons to promote operations; they nurse the delusions of the *malade imaginaire* (who is always really ill because, as there is no such thing as perfect health, nobody is ever really well); they exploit human folly, vanity, and fear of death as ruthlessly as their own health, strength, and patience are exploited by selfish hypochondriacs. They must do all these things or else run pecuniary risks that no man can fairly be asked to run. And the healthier the world becomes, the more they are compelled to live by imposture and the less by that really helpful activity of which all doctors get enough to preserve them from utter corruption. For even the most hardened humbug who ever prescribed ether tonics to ladies whose need for tonic is of precisely the same character as the need of poorer women for a glass of gin, has to help a mother through child-bearing often enough to feel that he is not living wholly in vain.

The Psychology of Self-Respect in Surgeons

The surgeon, though often more unscrupulous than the general practitioner, retains his self-respect more easily. The human conscience can subsist on very questionable food. No man who is occupied in doing a very difficult thing, and doing it very well, ever loses his self-respect. The shirk, the duffer, the malingerer, the coward, the weakling, may be put out of countenance by his own failures and frauds; but the man who does evil skilfully, energetically, masterfully, grows

prouder and bolder at every crime. The common man may have to found his self-respect on sobriety, honesty and industry; but a Napoleon needs no such props for his sense of dignity. If Nelson's conscience whispered to him at all in the silent watches of the night, you may depend on it it whispered about the Baltic and the Nile and Cape St Vincent, and not about his unfaithfulness to his wife. A man who robs little children when no one is looking can hardly have much self-respect or even self-esteem; but an accomplished burglar must be proud of himself. In the play to which I am at present preluding I have represented an artist who is so entirely satisfied with his artistic conscience, even to the point of dying like a saint with its support, that he is utterly selfish and unscrupulous in every other relation without feeling at the smallest disadvantage. The same thing may be observed in women who have a genius for personal attractiveness: they expend more thought, labor, skill, inventiveness, taste and endurance on making themselves lovely than would suffice to keep a dozen ugly women honest; and this enables them to maintain a high opinion of themselves, and an angry contempt for unattractive and personally careless women, whilst they lie and cheat and slander and sell themselves without a blush. The truth is, hardly any of us have ethical energy enough for more than one really inflexible point of honor. Andrea del Sarto, like Louis Dubedat in my play, must have expended on the attainment of his great mastery of design and his originality in fresco painting more conscientiousness and industry than go to the making of the reputations of a dozen ordinary mayors and churchwardens; but (if Vasari is to be believed) when the King of France entrusted him with money to buy pictures for him, he stole it to spend on his wife. Such cases are not confined to eminent artists. Unsuccessful, unskilful men are often much more scrupulous than successful ones. In the ranks of ordinary skilled labor many men are to be found who earn good wages and are never out of a job because they are strong,

indefatigable, and skilful, and who therefore are bold in a high opinion of themselves; but they are selfish and tyrannical, gluttonous and drunken, as their wives and children know to their cost.

Not only do these talented energetic people retain their self-respect through shameful misconduct: they do not even lose the respect of others, because their talents benefit and interest everybody, whilst their vices affect only a few. An actor, a painter, a composer, an author, may be as selfish as he likes without reproach from the public if only his art is superb; and he cannot fulfil this condition without sufficient effort and sacrifice to make him feel noble and martyred in spite of his selfishness. It may even happen that the selfishness of an artist may be a benefit to the public by enabling him to concentrate himself on their gratification with a recklessness of every other consideration that makes him highly dangerous to those about him. In sacrificing others to himself he is sacrificing them to the public he gratifies; and the public is quite content with that arrangement. The public actually has an interest in the artist's vices.

It has no such interest in the surgeon's vices. The surgeon's art is exercised at its expense, not for its gratification. We do not go to the operating table as we go to the theatre, to the picture gallery, to the concert room, to be entertained and delighted: we go to be tormented and maimed lest a worse thing should befall us. It is of the most extreme importance to us that the experts on whose assurance we face this horror and suffer this mutilation should have no interests but our own to think of; should judge our cases scientifically; and should feel about them kindly. Let us see what guarantees we have: first for the science, and then for the kindness.

Are Doctors Men of Science?

I presume nobody will question the existence of a widely

spread popular delusion that every doctor is a man of science. It is escaped only in the very small class which understands by science something more than conjuring with retorts and spirit lamps, magnets and microscopes, and discovering magical cures for disease. To a sufficiently ignorant man every captain of a trading schooner is a Galileo, every organ-grinder a Beethoven, every piano-tuner a Helmholtz, every Old Bailey barrister a Solon, every Seven Dials pigeon-dealer a Darwin, every scrivener a Shakespear, every locomotive engine a miracle, and its driver no less wonderful than George Stephenson. As a matter of fact, the rank and file of doctors are no more scientific than their tailors; or, if you prefer to put it the reverse way, their tailors are no less scientific than they. Doctoring is an art, not a science: any layman who is interested in science sufficiently to take in one of the scientific journals and follow the literature of the scientific movement, knows more about it than those doctors (probably a large majority) who are not interested in it, and practise only to earn their bread. Doctoring is not even the art of keeping people in health (no doctor seems able to advise you what to eat any better than his grandmother or the nearest quack): it is the art of curing illness. It does happen exceptionally that a practising doctor makes a contribution to science (my play describes a very notable one); but it happens much oftener that he draws disastrous conclusions from his clinical experience because he has no conception of scientific method, and believes, like any rustic, that the handling of evidence and statistics needs no expertness. The distinction between a quack doctor and a qualified one is mainly that only the qualified one is authorized to sign death certificates, for which both sorts seem to have about equal occasion. Unqualified practitioners now make large incomes as hygienists, and are resorted to as frequently by cultivated amateur scientists who understand quite well what they are doing as by ignorant people who are simply dupes. Bone-setters make fortunes under the very noses of our greatest

surgeons from educated and wealthy patients; and some of the most successful doctors on the register use quite heretical methods of treating disease, and have qualified themselves solely for convenience. Leaving out of account the village witches who prescribe spells and sell charms, the humblest professional healers in this country are the herbalists. These men wander through the fields on Sunday seeking for herbs with magic properties of curing disease, preventing childbirth, and the like. Each of them believes that he is on the verge of a great discovery, in which Virginia Snake Root will be an ingredient, heaven knows why! Virginia Snake Root fascinates the imagination of the herbalist as mercury used to fascinate the alchemists. On week days he keeps a shop in which he sells packets of pennyroyal, dandelion, &c., labelled with little lists of the diseases they are supposed to cure, and apparently do cure to the satisfaction of the people who keep on buying them. I have never been able to perceive any distinction between the science of the herbalist and that of the duly registered doctor. A relative of mine recently consulted a doctor about some of the ordinary symptoms which indicate the need for a holiday and a change. The doctor satisfied himself that the patient's heart was a little depressed. Digitalis being a drug labelled as a heart specific by the profession, he promptly administered a stiff dose. Fortunately the patient was a hardy old lady who was not easily killed. She recovered with no worse result than her conversion to Christian Science, which owes its vogue quite as much to public despair of doctors as to superstition. I am not, observe, here concerned with the question as to whether the dose of digitalis was judicious or not: the point is, that a farm laborer consulting a herbalist would have been treated in exactly the same way.

Bacteriology as a Superstition

The smattering of science that all—even doctors—pick up

from the ordinary newspapers nowadays only makes the doctor more dangerous than he used to be. Wise men used to take care to consult doctors qualified before 1860, who were usually contemptuous of or indifferent to the germ theory and bacteriological therapeutics; but now that these veterans have mostly retired or died, we are left in the hands of the generations which, having heard of microbes much as St Thomas Aquinas heard of angels, suddenly concluded that the whole art of healing could be summed up in the formula: Find the microbe and kill it. And even that they did not know how to do. The simplest way to kill most microbes is to throw them into an open street or river and let the sun shine on them, which explains the fact that when great cities have recklessly thrown all their sewage into the open river the water has sometimes been cleaner twenty miles below the city than thirty miles above it. But doctors instinctively avoid all facts that are reassuring, and eagerly swallow those that make it a marvel that anyone could possibly survive three days in an atmosphere consisting mainly of countless pathogenic germs. They conceive microbes as immortal until slain by a germicide administered by a duly qualified medical man. All through Europe people are adjured, by public notices and even under legal penalties, not to throw their microbes into the sunshine, but to collect them carefully in a handkerchief; shield the handkerchief from the sun in the darkness and warmth of the pocket; and send it to a laundry to be mixed up with everybody else's handkerchiefs, with results only too familiar to local health authorities.

In the first frenzy of microbe killing, surgical instruments were dipped in carbolic oil, which was a great improvement on not dipping them in anything at all and simply using them dirty; but as microbes are so fond of carbolic oil that they swarm in it, it was not a success from the anti-microbe point of view. Formalin was squirted into the circulation of consumptives until it was discovered that formalin nourishes the tubercle bacillus handsomely and kills men. The popular

theory of disease is the common medical theory: namely, that every disease had its microbe duly created in the garden of Eden, and has been steadily propagating itself and producing widening circles of malignant disease ever since. It was plain from the first that if this had been even approximately true, the whole human race would have been wiped out by the plague long ago, and that every epidemic, instead of fading out as mysteriously as it rushed in, would spread over the whole world. It was also evident that the characteristic microbe of a disease might be a symptom instead of a cause. An unpunctual man is always in a hurry; but it does not follow that hurry is the cause of unpunctuality: on the contrary, what is the matter with the patient is sloth. When Florence Nightingale said bluntly that if you overcrowded your soldiers in dirty quarters there would be an outbreak of smallpox among them, she was snubbed as an ignorant female who did not know that smallpox can be produced only by the importation of its specific microbe.

If this was the line taken about smallpox, the microbe of which has never yet been run down and exposed under the microscope by the bacteriologist, what must have been the ardor of conviction as to tuberculosis, tetanus, enteric fever, Maltese fever, diphtheria, and the rest of the diseases in which the characteristic bacillus had been identified! When there was no bacillus it was assumed that, since no disease could exist without a bacillus, it was simply eluding observation. When the bacillus was found, as it frequently was, in persons who were not suffering from the disease, the theory was saved by simply calling the bacillus an impostor, or pseudo-bacillus. The same boundless credulity which the public exhibit as to a doctor's power of diagnosis was shewn by the doctors themselves as to the analytic microbe hunters. These witch finders would give you a certificate of the ultimate constitution of anything from a sample of the water from your well to a scrap of your lungs, for seven-and-sixpence. I do not suggest that the analysts were dishonest.

No doubt they carried the analysis as far as as they could afford to carry it for the money. No doubt also they could afford to carry it far enough to be of some use. But the fact remains that just as doctors perform for half-a-crown, without the least misgiving, operations which could not be thoroughly and safely performed with due scientific rigor and the requisite apparatus by an unaided private practitioner for less than some thousands of pounds, so did they proceed on the assumption that they could get the last word of science as to the constituents of their pathological samples for a two-hours cab fare.

Economic Difficulties of Immunization

I have heard doctors affirm and deny almost every possible proposition as to disease and treatment. I can remember the time when doctors no more dreamt of consumption and pneumonia being infectious than they now dream of sea-sickness being infectious, or than so great a clinical observer as Sydenham dreamt of smallpox being infectious. I have heard doctors deny that there is such a thing as infection. I have heard them deny the existence of hydrophobia as a specific disease differing from tetanus. I have heard them defend prophylactic measures and prophylactic legislation as the sole and certain salvation of mankind from zymotic disease; and I have heard them denounce both as malignant spreaders of cancer and lunacy. But the one objection I have never heard from a doctor is the objection that prophylaxis by the inoculatory methods most in vogue is an economic impossibility under our private practice system. They buy some stuff from somebody for a shilling, and inject a pennyworth of it under their patient's skin for half-a-crown, concluding that, since this primitive rite pays the somebody and pays them, the problem of prophylaxis has been satisfactorily solved. The results are sometimes no worse than the ordinary results of dirt getting into cuts; but neither the

doctor nor the patient is quite satisfied unless the inoculation "takes": that is, unless it produces perceptible illness and disablement. Sometimes both doctor and patient get more value in this direction than they bargain for. The results of ordinary private-practice-inoculation at their worst are bad enough to be indistinguishable from those of the most discreditable and dreaded disease known; and doctors, to save the credit of the inoculation, have been driven to accuse their patient or their patient's parents of having contracted this disease independently of the inoculation, an excuse which naturally does not make the family any more resigned, and leads to public recriminations in which the doctors, forgetting everything but the immediate quarrel, naively excuse themselves by admitting, and even claiming as a point in their favor, that it is often impossible to distinguish the disease produced by their inoculation and the disease they have accused the patient of contracting. And both parties assume that what is at issue is the scientific soundness of the prophylaxis. It never occurs to them that the particular pathogenic germ which they intended to introduce into the patient's system may be quite innocent of the catastrophe, and that the casual dirt introduced with it may be at fault. When, as in the case of smallpox or cowpox, the germ has not yet been detected, what you inoculate is simply undefined matter that has been scraped off an anything but chemically clean calf suffering from the disease in question. You take your chance of the germ being in the scrapings, and, lest you should kill it, you take no precautions against other germs being in it as well. Anything may happen as the result of such an inoculation. Yet this is the only stuff of the kind which is prepared and supplied even in State establishments: that is, in the only establishments free from the commercial temptation to adulterate materials and scamp precautionary processes.

Even if the germ were identified, complete precautions would hardly pay. It is true that microbe farming is not

expensive. The cost of breeding and housing two head of cattle would provide for the breeding and housing of enough microbes to inoculate the entire population of the globe since human life first appeared on it. But the precautions necessary to insure that the inoculation shall consist of nothing else but the required germ in the proper state of attenuation are a very different matter from the precautions necessary in the distribution and consumption of beefsteaks. Yet people expect to find vaccines and anti-toxins and the like retailed at "popular prices" in private enterprise shops just as they expect to find ounces of tobacco and papers of pins.

THE PERILS OF INOCULATION

The trouble does not end with the matter to be inoculated. There is the question of the condition of the patient. The discoveries of Sir Almroth Wright have shewn that the appalling results which led to the hasty dropping in 1894 of Koch's tuberculin were not accidents, but perfectly orderly and inevitable phenomena following the injection of dangerously strong "vaccines" at the wrong moment, and reinforcing the disease instead of stimulating the resistance to it. To ascertain the right moment a laboratory and a staff of experts are needed. The general practitioner, having no such laboratory and no such experience, has always chanced it, and insisted, when he was unlucky, that the results were not due to the inoculation, but to some other cause: a favorite and not very tactful one being the drunkenness or licentiousness of the patient. But though a few doctors have now learnt the danger of inoculating without any reference to the patient's "opsonic index" at the moment of inoculation, and though those other doctors who are denouncing the danger as imaginary and opsonin as a craze or a fad, obviously do so because it involves an operation which they have neither the means nor the knowledge to perform, there is still no grasp of the economic change in

the situation. They have never been warned that the practicability of any method of extirpating disease depends not only on its efficacy, but on its cost. For example, just at present the world has run raving mad on the subject of radium, which has excited our credulity precisely as the apparitions at Lourdes excited the credulity of Roman Catholics. Suppose it were ascertained that every child in the world could be rendered absolutely immune from all disease during its entire life by taking half an ounce of radium to every pint of its milk. The world would be none the healthier, because not even a Crown Prince—no, not even the son of a Chicago Meat King, could afford the treatment. Yet it is doubtful whether doctors would refrain from prescribing it on that ground. The recklessness with which they now recommend wintering in Egypt or at Davos to people who cannot afford to go to Cornwall, and the orders given for champagne jelly and old port in households where such luxuries must obviously be acquired at the cost of stinting necessaries, often make one wonder whether it is possible for a man to go through a medical training and retain a spark of common sense.

This sort of inconsiderateness gets cured only in the classes where poverty, pretentious as it is even at its worst, cannot pitch its pretences high enough to make it possible for the doctor (himself often no better off than the patient) to assume that the average income of an English family is about £2000 at year, and that it is quite easy to break up a home, sell an old family seat at a sacrifice, and retire into a foreign sanatorium devoted to some "treatment" that did not exist two years ago and probably will not exist (except as a pretext for keeping an ordinary hotel) two years hence. In a poor practice the doctor must find cheap treatments for cheap people, or humiliate and lose his patients either by prescribing beyond their means or sending them to the public hospitals. When it comes to prophylactic inoculation, the alternative lies between the complete scientific

process, which can only be brought down to a reasonable cost by being very highly organized as a public service in a public institution, and such cheap, nasty, dangerous and scientifically spurious imitations as ordinary vaccination, which will probably be ended, like its equally vaunted forerunner, eighteenth century inoculation, by a purely reactionary law making all sorts of vaccination, scientific or not, criminal offences. Naturally, the poor doctor (that is, the average doctor) defends ordinary vaccination frantically, as it means to him the bread of his children. To secure the vehement and practically unanimous support of the rank and file of the medical profession for any sort of treatment or operation, all that is necessary is that it can be easily practised by a rather shabbily dressed man in a surgically dirty room in a surgically dirty house without any assistance, and that the materials for it shall cost, say, a penny, and the charge for it to a patient with £100 a year be half-a-crown. And, on the other hand, a hygienic measure has only to be one of such refinement, difficulty, precision and costliness as to be quite beyond the resources of private practice, to be ignored or angrily denounced as a fad.

Trade Unionism and Science

Here we have the explanation of the savage rancor that so amazes people who imagine that the controversy concerning vaccination is a scientific one. It has really nothing to do with science. The medical profession, consisting for the most part of very poor men struggling to keep up appearances beyond their means, find themselves threatened with the extinction of a considerable part of their incomes; a part, too, that is easily and regularly earned since it is independent of disease, and brings every person born into the nation, healthy or not, to the doctors. To boot, there is the occasional windfall of an epidemic, with its panic and rush for revaccination. Under such circumstances, vaccination would be

defended desperately were it twice as dirty, dangerous, and unscientific in method as it actually is. The note of fury in the defence, the feeling that the anti-vaccinator is doing a cruel, ruinous, inconsiderate thing in a mood of malignant folly: all this, so puzzling to the observer who knows nothing of the economic side of the question, and only sees that the anti-vaccinator, having nothing whatever to gain and a good deal to lose by placing himself in opposition to the law and to the outcry that adds private persecution to legal penalties, can have no interest in the matter except the interest of a reformer in abolishing a corrupt and mischievous superstition, becomes intelligible the moment the tragedy of medical poverty and the lucrativeness of cheap vaccination is taken into account.

In the face of such economic pressure as this, it is silly to expect that medical teaching, any more than medical practice, can possibly be scientific. The test to which all methods of treatment are finally brought is whether they are lucrative to doctors or not. It would be difficult to cite any proposition less obnoxious to science than that advanced by Hahnemann: to wit, that drugs which in large doses produce certain symptoms, counteract them in very small doses, just as in more modern practice it is found that a sufficiently small inoculation with typhoid rallies our powers to resist the disease instead of prostrating us with it. But Hahnemann and his followers were frantically persecuted for a century by generations of apothecary-doctors whose incomes depended on the quantity of drugs they could induce their patients to swallow. These two cases of ordinary vaccination and homeopathy are typical of all the rest. Just as the object of a trade union under existing conditions must finally be, not to improve the technical quality of the work done by its members, but to secure a living wage for them, so the object of the medical profession today is to secure an income for the private doctor; and to this consideration all concern for science and public health must give

way when the two come into conflict. Fortunately they are not always in conflict. Up to a certain point doctors, like carpenters and masons, must earn their living by doing the work that the public wants from them; and as it is not in the nature of things possible that such public want should be based on unmixed disutility, it may be admitted that doctors have their uses, real as well as imaginary. But just as the best carpenter or mason will resist the introduction of a machine that is likely to throw him out of work, or the public technical education of unskilled laborers' sons to compete with him, so the doctor will resist with all his powers of persecution every advance of science that threatens his income. And as the advance of scientific hygiene tends to make the private doctor's visits rarer, and the public inspector's frequenter, whilst the advance of scientific therapeutics is in the direction of treatments that involve highly organized laboratories, hospitals, and public institutions generally, it unluckily happens that the organization of private practitioners which we call the medical profession is coming more and more to represent, not science, but desperate and embittered anti-science: a state of things which is likely to get worse until the average doctor either depends upon or hopes for an appointment in the public health service for his livelihood.

So much for our guarantees as to medical science. Let us now deal with the more painful subject of medical kindness.

Doctors and Vivisection

The importance to our doctors of a reputation for the tenderest humanity is so obvious, and the quantity of benevolent work actually done by them for nothing (a great deal of it from sheer good nature) so large, that at first sight it seems unaccountable that they should not only throw all their credit away, but deliberately choose to band

themselves publicly with outlaws and scoundrels by claiming that in the pursuit of their professional knowledge they should be free from the restraints of law, of honor, of pity, of remorse, of everything that distinguishes an orderly citizen from a South Sea buccaneer, or a philosopher from an inquisitor. For here we look in vain for either an economic or a sentimental motive. In every generation fools and blackguards have made this claim; and honest and reasonable men, led by the strongest contemporary minds, have repudiated it and exposed its crude rascality. From Shakespear and Dr Johnson to Ruskin and Mark Twain, the natural abhorrence of sane mankind for the vivisector's cruelty, and the contempt of able thinkers for his imbecile casuistry, have been expressed by the most popular spokesmen of humanity. If the medical profession were to outdo the Anti-Vivisection Societies in a general professional protest against the practice and principles of the vivisectors, every doctor in the kingdom would gain substantially by the immense relief and reconciliation which would follow such a reassurance of the humanity of the doctor. Not one doctor in a thousand is a vivisector, or has any interest in vivisection, either pecuniary or intellectual, or would treat his dog cruelly or allow anyone else to do it. It is true that the doctor complies with the professional fashion of defending vivisection, and assuring you that people like Shakespear and Dr Johnson and Ruskin and Mark Twain are ignorant sentimentalists, just as he complies with any other silly fashion: the mystery is, how it became the fashion in spite of its being so injurious to those who follow it. Making all possible allowance for the effect of the brazen lying of the few men who bring a rush of despairing patients to their doors by professing in letters to the nswspapers to have learnt from vivisection how to cure certain diseases, and the assurances of the sayers of smooth things that the practice is quite painless under the law, it is still difficult

to find any civilized motive for an attitude by which the medical profession has everything to lose and nothing to gain.

The Primitive Savage Motive

I say civilized motive advisedly; for primitive tribal motives are easy enough to find. Every savage chief who is not a Mahomet learns that if he wishes to strike the imagination of his tribe—and without doing that he cannot rule them—he must terrify or revolt them from time to time by acts of hideous cruelty or disgusting unnaturalness. We are far from being as superior to such tribes as we imagine. It is very doubtful indeed whether Peter the Great could have effected the changes he made in Russia if he had not fascinated and intimidated his people by his monstrous cruelties and grotesque escapades. Had he been a nineteenth-century king of England, he would have had to wait for some huge accidental calamity: a cholera epidemic, a war, or an insurrection, before waking us up sufficiently to get anything done. Vivisection helps the doctor to rule us as Peter ruled the Russians. The notion that the man who does dreadful things is superhuman, and that therefore he can also do wonderful things either as ruler, avenger, healer, or what not, is by no means confined to barbarians. Just as the manifold wickedness and stupidities of our criminal code are supported, not by any general comprehension of law or study of jurisprudence, not even by simple vindictiveness, but by the superstition that a calamity of any sort must be expiated by a human sacrifice; so the wickedness and stupidities of our medicine men are rooted in superstitions that have no more to do with science than the traditional ceremony of christening an ironclad has to do with the effectiveness of its armament. We have only to turn to Macaulay's description of the treatment of Charles II in his last illness to see how strongly his physicians felt that their only chance of cheating death was by outraging nature

in tormenting and disgusting their unfortunate patient. True, this was more than two centuries ago; but I have heard my own nineteenth-century grandfather describe the cupping and firing and nauseous medicines of his time with perfect credulity as to their beneficial effects; and some more modern treatments appear to me quite as barbarous. It is in this way that vivisection pays the doctor. It appeals to the fear and credulity of the savage in us; and without fear and credulity half the private doctor's occupation and seven-eighths of his influence would be gone.

The Higher Motive. The Tree of Knowledge

But the greatest force of all on the side of vivisection is the mighty and indeed divine force of curiosity. Here we have no decaying tribal instinct which men strive to root out of themselves as they strive to root out the tiger's lust for blood. On the contrary, the curiosity of the ape, or of the child who pulls out the legs and wings of a fly to see what it will do without them, or who, on being told that a cat dropped out of the window will always fall on its legs, immediately tries the experiment on the nearest cat from the highest window in the house (I protest I did it myself from the first floor only), is as nothing compared to the thirst for knowledge of the philosopher, the poet, the biologist, and the naturalist. I have always despised Adam because he had to be tempted by the woman, as she was by the serpent, before he could be induced to pluck the apple from the tree of knowledge. I should have swallowed every apple on the tree the moment the owner's back was turned. When Gray said "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise," he forgot that it is godlike to be wise; and since nobody wants bliss particularly, or could stand more than a very brief taste of it if it were attainable, and since everybody, by the deepest law of the Life Force, desires to be godlike, it is stupid, and indeed blasphemous and despairing,

to hope that the thirst for knowledge will either diminish or consent to be subordinated to any other end whatsoever. We shall see later on that the claim that has risen in this way for the unconditioned pursuit of knowledge is as idle as all dreams of unconditioned activity; but none the less the right to knowledge must be regarded as a fundamental human right. The fact that men of science have had to fight so hard to secure its recognition, and are still so vigorously persecuted when they discover anything that is not quite palatable to vulgar people, makes them sorely jealous for that right; and when they hear a popular outcry for the suppression of a method of research which has an air of being scientific, their first instinct is to rally to the defence of that method without further consideration, with the result that they sometimes, as in the case of vivisection, presently find themselves fighting on a false issue.

The Flaw in the Argument

I may as well pause here to explain their error. The right to know is like the right to live. It is fundamental and unconditional in its assumption that knowledge, like life, is a desirable thing, though any fool can prove that ignorance is bliss, and that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing" (a little being the most that any of us can attain), as easily as that the pains of life are more numerous and constant than its pleasures, and that therefore we should all be better dead. The logic is unimpeachable; but its only effect is to make us say that if these are the conclusions logic leads to, so much the worse for logic, after which curt dismissal of Folly, we continue living and learning by instinct: that is, as of right. We legislate on the assumption that no man may be killed on the strength of a demonstration that he would be happier in his grave, not even if he is dying slowly of cancer and begs the doctor to despatch him quickly and mercifully. To get killed lawfully he must violate somebody

else's right to live by committing murder. But he is by no means free to live unconditionally. In society he can exercise his right to live only under very stiff conditions. In countries where there is compulsory military service he may even have to throw away his individual life to save the life of the community.

It is just so in the case of the right to knowledge. It is a right that is as yet very imperfectly recognized in practice. But in theory it is admitted that an adult person in pursuit of knowledge must not be refused it on the ground that he would be better or happier without it. Parents and priests may forbid knowledge to those who accept their authority; and social taboo may be made effective by acts of legal persecution under cover of repressing blasphemy, obscenity, and sedition; but no government now openly forbids its subjects to pursue knowledge on the ground that knowledge is in itself a bad thing, or that it is possible for any of us to have too much of it.

Limitations of the Right to Knowledge

But neither does any government exempt the pursuit of knowledge, any more than the pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness (as the American Constitution puts it), from all social conditions. No man is allowed to put his mother into the stove because he desires to know how long an adult woman will survive at a temperature of 500° Fahrenheit, no matter how important or interesting that particular addition to the store of human knowledge may be. A man who did so would have short work made not only of his right to knowledge, but of his right to live and all his other rights at the same time. The right to knowledge is not the only right; and its exercise must be limited by respect for other rights, and for its own exercise by others. When a man says to Society, "May I torture my mother in pursuit of knowledge?" Society replies "No." If he pleads, "What!

Not even if I have a chance of finding out how to cure cancer by doing it?" Society still says, "Not even then." If the scientist, making the best of his disappointment, goes on to ask may he torture a dog, the stupid and callous people who do not realize that a dog is a fellow-creature, and sometimes a good friend, may say Yes, though Shakespear, Dr Johnson, and their like may say No. But even those who say "You may torture *a* dog" never say "You may torture *my* dog." And nobody says, "Yes, because in the pursuit of knowledge you may do as you please." Just as even the stupidest people say, in effect, "If you cannot attain to knowledge without burning your mother you must do without knowledge," so the wisest people say, "If you cannot attain to knowledge without torturing a dog, you must do without knowledge."

A False Alternative

But in practice you cannot persuade any wise man that this alternative can ever be forced on anyone but a fool, or that a fool can be trusted to learn anything from any experiment, cruel or humane. The Chinaman who burnt down his house to roast his pig was no doubt honestly unable to conceive any less disastrous way of cooking his dinner; and the roast must have been spoiled after all (a perfect type of the average vivisectionist experiment); but this did not prove that the Chinaman was right: it only proved that the Chinaman was an incapable cook and, fundamentally, a fool.

Take another celebrated experiment: one in sanitary reform. In the days of Nero Rome was in the same predicament as London today. If someone would burn down London, and it were rebuilt, as it would now have to be, subject to the sanitary by-laws and Building Act provisions enforced by the London County Council, it would be enormously improved; and the average lifetime of Londoners

would be considerably prolonged. Nero argued in the same way about Rome. He employed incendiaries to set it on fire; and he played the harp in scientific raptures whilst it was burning. I am so far of Nero's way of thinking that I have often said, when consulted by despairing sanitary reformers, that what London needs to make her healthy is an earthquake. Why, then, it may be asked, do not I, as a public-spirited man, employ incendiaries to set it on fire with a heroic disregard of the consequences to myself and others? Any vivisector would, if he had the courage of his opinions. The reasonable answer is that London can be made healthy without burning her down; and that as we have not enough civic virtue to make her healthy in a humane and economical way, we should not have enough to rebuild her in that way. In the old Hebrew legend, God lost patience with the world as Nero did with Rome, and drowned everybody except a single family. But the result was that the progeny of that family reproduced all the vices of their predecessors so exactly that the misery caused by the flood might just as well have been spared: things went on just as they did before. In the same way, the list of diseases which vivisection claims to have cured is long; but the returns of the Registrar-General shew that people still persist in dying of them as if vivisection had never been heard of. Any fool can burn down a city or cut an animal open; and an exceptionally foolish fool is quite likely to promise enormous benefits to the race as the result of such activities. But when the constructive, benevolent part of the business comes to be done, the same want of imagination, the same stupidity and cruelty, the same laziness and want of perseverance that prevented Nero or the vivisector from devising or pushing through humane methods, prevents him from bringing order out of the chaos and happiness out of the misery he has made. At one time it seemed reasonable enough to declare that it was impossible to find whether or not there was a stone inside a man's body except by exploring it with a knife,

or to find out what the sun is made of without visiting it in a balloon. Both these impossibilities have been achieved, but not by vivisectors. The Röntgen rays need not hurt the patient; and spectrum analysis involves no destruction. After such triumphs of humane experiment and reasoning, it is useless to assure us that there is no other key to knowledge except cruelty. When the vivisector offers us that assurance, we reply simply and contemptuously, "You mean that you are not clever or humane or energetic enough to find one."

Cruelty for its own Sake

It will now, I hope, be clear why the attack on vivisection is not an attack on the right to knowledge: why, indeed, those who have the deepest conviction of the sacredness of that right are the leaders of the attack. No knowledge is finally impossible of human attainment; for even though it may be beyond our present capacity, the needed capacity is not unattainable. Consequently no method of investigation is the only method; and no law forbidding any particular method can cut us off from the knowledge we hope to gain by it. The only knowledge we lose by forbidding cruelty is knowledge at first hand of cruelty itself, which is precisely the knowledge humane people wish to be spared.

But the question remains: Do we all really wish to be spared that knowledge? Are humane methods really to be preferred to cruel ones? Even if the experiments come to nothing, may not their cruelty be enjoyed for its own sake, as a sensational luxury? Let us face these questions boldly, not shrinking from the fact that cruelty is one of the primitive pleasures of mankind, and that the detection of its Protean disguises as law, education, medicine, discipline, sport and so forth, is one of the most difficult of the unending tasks of the legislator.

Our own Cruelties

At first blush it may seem not only unnecessary, but even indecent, to discuss such a proposition as the elevation of cruelty to the rank of human right. Unnecessary, because no vivisector confesses to a love of cruelty for its own sake or claims any general fundamental right to be cruel. Indecent, because there is an accepted convention to repudiate cruelty; and vivisection is only tolerated by the law on condition that, like judicial torture, it shall be done as mercifully as the nature of the practice allows. But the moment the controversy becomes embittered, the recriminations bandied between the opposed parties bring us face-to-face with some very ugly truths. On one occasion I was invited to speak at a large Anti-Vivisection meeting in the Queen's Hall in London. I found myself on the platform with fox hunters, tame stag hunters, men and women whose calendar was divided, not by pay days and quarter days, but by seasons for killing animals for sport: the fox, the hare, the otter, the partridge and the rest having each its appointed date for slaughter. The ladies among us wore hats and cloaks and head-dresses obtained by wholesale massacres, ruthless trappings, callous extermination of our fellow creatures. We insisted on our butchers supplying us with white veal, and were large and constant consumers of *pâté de foie gras*: both comestibles being obtained by revolting methods. We sent our sons to public schools where indecent flogging is a recognized method of taming the young human animal. Yet we were all in hysterics of indignation at the cruelties of the vivisectors. These, if any were present, must have smiled sardonically at such inhuman humanitarians, whose daily habits and fashionable amusements cause more suffering in England in a week than all the vivisectors of Europe do in a year. I made a very effective speech, not exclusively against vivisection, but against cruelty; and I have never been asked to speak since by that Society, nor do I expect to be, as I

should probably give such offence to its most affluent subscribers that its attempts to suppress vivisection would be seriously hindered. But that does not prevent the vivisectors from freely using the "youre another" retort, and using it with justice.

We must therefore give ourselves no airs of superiority when denouncing the cruelties of vivisection. We all do just as horrible things, with even less excuse. But in making that admission we are also making short work of the virtuous airs with which we are sometimes referred to the humanity of the medical profession as a guarantee that vivisection is not abused—much as if our burglars should assure us that they are too honest to abuse the practice of burgling. We are, as a matter of fact, a cruel nation; and our habit of disguising our vices by giving polite names to the offences we are determined to commit, does not, unfortunately for my own comfort, impose on me. Vivisectors can hardly pretend to be better than the classes from which they are drawn, or those above them; and if these classes are capable of sacrificing animals in various cruel ways under cover of sport, fashion, education, discipline, and even, when the cruel sacrifices are human sacrifices, of political economy, it is idle for the vivisector to pretend that he is incapable of practising cruelty for pleasure or profit or both under the cloak of science. We are all tarred with the same brush; and the vivisectors are not slow to remind us of it, and to protest vehemently against being branded as exceptionally cruel and as devisers of horrible instruments of torture by people whose main notion of enjoyment is cruel sport, and whose requirements in the way of villainously cruel traps occupy pages of the catalogue of the Army and Navy Stores.

The Scientific Investigation of Cruelty

There is in man a specific lust for cruelty which infects even his passion of pity and makes it savage. Simple disgust

at cruelty is very rare. The people who turn sick and faint and those who gloat are often alike in the pains they take to witness executions, floggings, operations or any other exhibitions of suffering, especially those involving bloodshed, blows, and laceration. A craze for cruelty can be developed just as a craze for drink can; and nobody who attempts to ignore cruelty as a possible factor in the attraction of vivisection and even of anti-vivisection, or in the credulity with which we accept its excuses, can be regarded as a scientific investigator of it. Those who accuse vivisectors of indulging the well-known passion of cruelty under the cloak of research are therefore putting forward a strictly scientific psychological hypothesis, which is also simple, human, obvious, and probable. It may be as wounding to the personal vanity of the vivisector as Darwin's Origin of Species was to the people who could not bear to think that they were cousins to the monkeys (remember Goldsmith's anger when he was told that he could not move his upper jaw); but science has to consider only the truth of the hypothesis, and not whether conceited people will like it or not. In vain do the sentimental champions of vivisection declare themselves the most humane of men, inflicting suffering only to relieve it, scrupulous in the use of anaesthetics, and void of all passion except the passion of pity for a disease-ridden world. The really scientific investigator answers that the question cannot be settled by hysterical protestations, and that if the vivisectionist rejects deductive reasoning, he had better clear his character by his own favorite method of experiment.

Suggested Laboratory Tests of the Vivisector's Emotions

Take the hackneyed case of the Italian who tortured mice, ostensibly to find out about the effects of pain rather less than the nearest dentist could have told him, and who

boasted of the ecstatic sensations (he actually used the word love) with which he carried out his experiments. Or the gentleman who starved sixty dogs to death to establish the fact that a dog deprived of food gets progressively lighter and weaker, becoming remarkably emaciated, and finally dying: an undoubted truth, but ascertainable without laboratory experiments by a simple inquiry addressed to the nearest policeman, or, failing him, to any sane person in Europe. The Italian is diagnosed as a cruel voluptuary: the dog-starver is passed over as such a hopeless fool that it is impossible to take any interest in him. Why not test the diagnosis scientifically? Why not perform a careful series of experiments on persons under the influence of voluptuous ecstasy, so as to ascertain its physiological symptoms? Then perform a second series on persons engaged in mathematical work or machine designing, so as to ascertain the symptoms of cold scientific activity? Then note the symptoms of a vivisector performing a cruel experiment; and compare them with the voluptuary symptoms and the mathematical symptoms? Such experiments would be quite as interesting and important as any yet undertaken by the vivisectors. They might open a line of investigation which would finally make, for instance, the ascertainment of the guilt or innocence of an accused person a much exacter process than the very fallible methods of our criminal courts. But instead of proposing such an investigation, our vivisectors offer us all the pious protestations and all the huffy recriminations that any common unscientific mortal offers when he is accused of unworthy conduct.

Routine

Yet most vivisectors would probably come triumphant out of such a series of experiments, because vivisection is now a routine, like butchering or hanging or flogging; and many of the men who practise it do so only because it has been

established as part of the profession they have adopted. Far from enjoying it, they have simply overcome their natural repugnance and become indifferent to it, as men inevitably become indifferent to anything they do often enough. It is this dangerous power of custom that makes it so difficult to convince the common sense of mankind that any established commercial or professional practice has its root in passion. Let a routine once spring from passion, and you will presently find thousands of routineers following it passionlessly for a livelihood. Thus it always seems strained to speak of the religious convictions of a clergyman, because nine out of ten clergymen have no religious convictions: they are ordinary officials carrying on a routine of baptizing, marrying, and churching; praying, reciting, and preaching: and, like solicitors or doctors, getting away from their duties with relief to hunt, to garden, to keep bees, to go into society, and the like. In the same way many people do cruel and vile things without being in the least cruel or vile, because the routine to which they have been brought up is superstitiously cruel and vile. To say that every man who beats his children and every schoolmaster who flogs a pupil is a conscious debauchee is absurd: thousands of dull, conscientious people beat their children conscientiously, because they were beaten themselves and think children ought to be beaten. The ill-tempered vulgarity that instinctively strikes at and hurts a thing that annoys it (and all children are annoying), and the simple stupidity that requires from a child perfection beyond the reach of the wisest and best adults (perfect truthfulness coupled with perfect obedience is quite a common condition of leaving a child unwhipped), produce a good deal of flagellation among people who not only do not lust after it, but who hit the harder because they are angry at having to perform an uncomfortable duty. These people will beat merely to assert their authority, or to carry out what they conceive to be a divine order on the strength of the precept of Solomon recorded in the Bible.

which carefully adds that Solomon completely spoilt his own son and turned away from the god of his fathers to the sensuous idolatry in which he ended his days.

In the same way we find men and women practising vivisection as senselessly as a humane butcher, who adores his fox terrier, will cut a calf's throat and hang it up by its heels to bleed slowly to death because it is the custom to eat veal and insist on its being white; or as a German purveyor nails a goose to a board and stuffs it with food because fashionable people eat *pâté de foie gras*; or as the crew of a whaler breaks in on a colony of seals and clubs them to death in wholesale massacre because ladies want sealskin jackets; or as fanciers blind singing birds with hot needles, and mutilate the ears and tails of dogs and horses. Let cruelty or kindness or anything else once become customary and it will be practised by people to whom it is not at all natural, but whose rule of life is simply to do only what everybody else does, and who would lose their employment and starve if they indulged in any peculiarity. A respectable man will lie daily, in speech and in print, about the qualities of the article he lives by selling, because it is customary to do so. He will flog his boy for telling a lie, because it is customary to do so. He will also flog him for not telling a lie if the boy tells inconvenient or disrespectful truths, because it is customary to do so. He will give the same boy a present on his birthday, and buy him a spade and bucket at the seaside, because it is customary to do so, being all the time neither particularly mendacious, nor particularly cruel, nor particularly generous, but simply incapable of ethical judgment or independent action.

Just so do we find a crowd of petty vivisectionists daily committing atrocities and stupidities, because it is the custom to do so. Vivisection is customary as part of the routine of preparing lectures in medical schools. For instance, there are two ways of making the action of the heart visible to students. One, a barbarous, ignorant, and thoughtless way,

is to stick little flags into a rabbit's heart and let the students see the flags jump. The other, an elegant, ingenious, well-informed, and instructive way, is to put a sphygmograph on the student's wrist and let him see a record of his heart's action traced by a needle on a slip of smoked paper. But it has become the custom for lecturers to teach from the rabbit; and the lecturers are not original enough to get out of their groove. Then there are the demonstrations which are made by cutting up frogs with scissors. The most humane man, however repugnant the operation may be to him at first, cannot do it at lecture after lecture for months without finally—and that very soon—feeling no more for the frog than if he were cutting up pieces of paper. Such clumsy and lazy ways of teaching are based on the cheapness of frogs and rabbits. If machines were as cheap as frogs, engineers would not only be taught the anatomy of machines and the functions of their parts: they would also have machines misused and wrecked before them so that they might learn as much as possible by using their eyes, and as little as possible by using their brains and imaginations. Thus we have, as part of the routine of teaching, a routine of vivisection which soon produces complete indifference to it on the part even of those who are naturally humane. If they pass on from the routine of lecture preparation, not into general practice, but into research work, they carry this acquired indifference with them into the laboratory, where any atrocity is possible, because all atrocities satisfy curiosity. The routine man is in the majority in his profession always: consequently the moment his practice is tracked down to its source in human passion there is a great and quite sincere poohpoohing from himself, from the mass of the profession, and from the mass of the public, which sees that the average doctor is much too commonplace and decent a person to be capable of passionate wickedness of any kind.

Here, then, we have in vivisection, as in all the other tolerated and instituted cruelties, this anti-climax: that

only a negligible percentage of those who practise and consequently defend it get any satisfaction out of it. As in Mr Galsworthy's play Justice the useless and detestable torture of solitary imprisonment is shewn at its worst without the introduction of a single cruel person into the drama, so it would be possible to represent all the torments of vivisection dramatically without introducing a single vivisector who had not felt sick at his first experience in the laboratory. Not that this can exonerate any vivisector from suspicion of enjoying his work (or *her* work: a good deal of the vivisection in medical schools is done by women). In every autobiography which records a real experience of school or prison life, we find that here and there among the routineers there is to be found the genuine amateur, the orgiastic flogging schoolmaster or the nagging warder, who has sought out a cruel profession for the sake of its cruelty. But it is the genuine routineer who is the bulwark of the practice, because, though you c in excite public fury against a Sade, a Bluebeard, or a Nero; you cannot rouse any feeling against dull Mr Smith doing his duty: that is, doing the usual thing. He is so obviously no better and no worse than anyone else that it is difficult to conceive that the things he does are abominable. If you would see public dislike surging up in a moment against an individual, you must watch one who does something unusual, no matter how sensible it may be. The name of Jonas Hanway lives as that of a brave man because he was the first who dared to appear in the streets of this rainy island with an umbrella.

The Old Line between Man and Beast

But there is still a distinction to be clung to by those who dare not tell themselves the truth about the medical profession because they are so helplessly dependent on it when death threatens the household. That distinction is the line that separates the brute from the man in the old classification.

Granted, they will plead, that we are all cruel; yet the tame stag hunter does not hunt men; and the sportsman who lets a leash of greyhounds loose on a hare would be horrified at the thought of letting them loose on a human child. The lady who gets her cloak by flaying a sable does not flay a negro; nor does it ever occur to her that her veal cutlet might be improved on by a slice of tender baby.

Now there was a time when some trust could be placed in this distinction. The Roman Catholic Church still maintains, with what it must permit me to call a stupid obstinacy, and in spite of St Francis and St Anthony, that animals have no souls and no rights; so that you cannot sin against an animal, or against God by anything you may choose to do to an animal. Resisting the temptation to enter on an argument as to whether you may not sin against your own soul if you are unjust or cruel to the least of those whom St Francis called his little brothers. I have only to point out here that nothing could be more despicably superstitious in the opinion of a vivisector than the notion that science recognizes any such step in evolution as the step from a physical organism to an immortal soul. That conceit has been taken out of all our men of science, and out of all our doctors, by the evolutionists; and when it is considered how completely obsessed biological science has become in our days, not by the full scope of evolution, but by that particular method of it which has neither sense nor purpose nor life nor anything human, much less godlike, in it: by the method, that is, of so-called Natural Selection (meaning no selection at all, but mere dead accident and luck), the folly of trusting to vivisectors to hold the human animal any more sacred than the other animals becomes so clear that it would be waste of time to insist further on it. As a matter of fact the man who once concedes to the vivisector the right to put a dog outside the laws of honor and fellowship, concedes to him also the right to put himself outside them; for he is nothing to the vivisector but a more highly developed, and

consequently more interesting-to-experiment-on vertebrate than the dog.

Vivisecting the Human Subject

I have in my hand a printed and published account by a doctor of how he tested his remedy for pulmonary tuberculosis, which was, to inject a powerful germicide directly into the circulation by stabbing a vein with a syringe. He was one of those doctors who are able to command public sympathy by saying, quite truly, that when they discovered that the proposed treatment was dangerous, they experimented thenceforth on themselves. In this case the doctor was devoted enough to carry his experiments to the point of running serious risks, and actually making himself very uncomfortable. But he did not begin with himself. His first experiment was on two hospital patients. On receiving a message from the hospital to the effect that these two martyrs to therapeutic science had all but expired in convulsions, he experimented on a rabbit, which instantly dropped dead. It was then, and not until then, that he began to experiment on himself, with the germicide modified in the direction indicated by the experiments made on the two patients and the rabbit. As a good many people countenance vivisection because they fear that if the experiments are not made on rabbits they will be made on themselves, it is worth noting that in this case, where both rabbits and men were equally available, the men, being of course enormously more instructive and costing nothing, were experimented on first. Once grant the ethics of the vivisectionists and you not only sanction the experiment on the human subject, but make it the first duty of the vivisector. If a guinea pig may be sacrificed for the sake of the very little that can be learnt from it, shall not a man be sacrificed for the sake of the great deal that can be learnt from him? At all events, he *is* sacrificed, as this typical case shows. I may add (not that it touches the

argument) that the doctor, the patients, and the rabbit all suffered in vain, as far as the hoped-for rescue of the race from pulmonary consumption is concerned.

"The Lie is a European Power"

Now at the very time when the lectures describing these experiments were being circulated in print and discussed eagerly by the medical profession, the customary denials that patients are experimented on were as loud, as indignant, as high-minded as ever, in spite of the few intelligent doctors who point out rightly that all treatments are experiments on the patient. And this brings us to an obvious but mostly overlooked weakness in the vivisector's position: that is, his inevitable forfeiture of all claim to have his word believed. It is hardly to be expected that a man who does not hesitate to vivisect for the sake of science will hesitate to lie about it afterwards to protect it from what he deems the ignorant sentimentality of the laity. When the public conscience stirs uneasily and threatens suppression, there is never wanting some doctor of eminent position and high character who will sacrifice himself devotedly to the cause of science by coming forward to assure the public on his honor that all experiments on animals are completely painless; although he must know that the very experiments which first provoked the anti-vivisection movement by their atrocity were experiments to ascertain the physiological effects of the sensation of extreme pain (the much more interesting physiology of pleasure remains uninvestigated) and that all experiments in which sensation is a factor are voided by its suppression. Besides, vivisection may be painless in cases where the experiments are very cruel. If a person scratches me with a poisoned dagger so gently that I do not feel the scratch, he has achieved a painless vivisection; but if I presently die in torment I am not likely to consider that his humanity is amply vindicated by his gentleness. A cobra's bite hurts so

little that the creature is almost, legally speaking, a vivisector who inflicts no pain. By giving his victims chloroform before biting them he could comply with the law completely.

Here, then, is a pretty deadlock. Public support of vivisection is founded almost wholly on the assurances of the vivisectors that great public benefits may be expected from the practice. Not for a moment do I suggest that such a defence would be valid even if proved. But when the witnesses begin by alleging that in the cause of science all the customary ethical obligations (which include the obligation to tell the truth) are suspended, what weight can any reasonable person give to their testimony? I would rather swear fifty lies than take an animal which had licked my hand in good fellowship and torture it. If I did torture the dog, I should certainly not have the face to turn round and ask how any person dare suspect an honorable man like myself of telling lies. Most sensible and humane people would, I hope, reply flatly that honorable men do not behave dishonorably even to dogs. The murderer who, when asked by the chaplain whether he had any other crimes to confess, replied indignantly "What do you take me for?" reminds us very strongly of the vivisectors who are so deeply hurt when their evidence is set aside as worthless.

An Argument which would Defend any Crime

The Achilles heel of vivisection, however, is not to be found in the pain it causes, but in the line of argument by which it is justified. The medical code regarding it as simply criminal anarchism at its very worst. Indeed, no criminal has yet had the impudence to argue as every vivisector argues. No burglar contends that as it is admittedly important to have money to spend, and as the object of burglary is to provide the burglar with money to spend, and as in many instances it has achieved this object, therefore the burglar is a public benefactor and the police are ignorant

sentimenalists. No highway robber has yet harrowed us with denunciations of the puling moralist who allows his child to suffer all the evils of poverty because certain faddists think it dishonest to garotte an alderman. Thieves and assassins understand quite well that there are paths of acquisition, even of the best things, that are barred to all men of honor. Again, has the silliest burglar ever pretended that to put a stop to burglary is to put a stop to industry? All the vivisections that have been performed since the world began have produced nothing so important as the innocent and honorable discovery of radiography; and one of the reasons why radiography was not discovered sooner was that the men whose business it was to discover new clinical methods were coarsening and stupefying themselves with the sensual villanies and cutthroat's casuistries of vivisection. The law of the conservation of energy holds good in physiology as in other things: every vivisector is a deserter from the army of honorable investigators. But the vivisector does not see this. He not only calls his methods scientific: he contends that there are no other scientific methods. When you express your natural loathing for his cruelty and your natural contempt for his stupidity, he imagines that you are attacking science. Yet he has no inkling of the method and temper of science. The point at issue being plainly whether he is a rascal or not, he not only insists that the real point is whether some hot-headed anti-vivisectionist is a liar (which he proves by ridiculously unscientific assumptions as to the degree of accuracy attainable in human statement), but never dreams of offering any scientific evidence by his own methods.

There are many paths to knowledge already discovered; and no enlightened man doubts that there are many more waiting to be discovered. Indeed, all paths lead to knowledge; because even the vilest and stupidest action teaches us something about vileness and stupidity, and may accidentally teach us a good deal more: for instance, a cutthroat learns (and perhaps teaches) the anatomy of the carotid artery and

jugular vein; and there can be no question that the burning of St Joan of Arc must have been a most instructive and interesting experiment to a good observer, and could have been made more so if it had been carried out by skilled physiologists under laboratory conditions. The earthquake in San Francisco proved invaluable as an experiment in the stability of giant steel buildings; and the ramming of the Victoria by the Camperdown settled doubtful points of the greatest importance in naval warfare. According to vivisectionist logic our builders would be justified in producing artificial earthquakes with dynamite, and our admirals in contriving catastrophes at naval manoeuvres, in order to follow up the line of research thus accidentally discovered.

The truth is, if the acquisition of knowledge justifies every sort of conduct, it justifies any sort of conduct, from the illumination of Nero's feasts by burning human beings alive (another interesting experiment) to the simplest act of kindness. And in the light of that truth it is clear that the exemption of the pursuit of knowledge from the laws of honor is the most hideous conceivable enlargement of anarchy; worse, by far, than an exemption of the pursuit of money or political power; since these can hardly be attained without some regard for at least the appearances of human welfare, whereas a curious devil might destroy the whole race in torment, acquiring knowledge all the time from his highly interesting experiment. There is more danger in one respectable scientist countenancing such a monstrous claim than in fifty assassins or dynamitards. The man who makes it is ethically imbecile; and whoever imagines that it is a scientific claim has not the faintest conception of what science means. The paths to knowledge are countless. One of these paths is a path through darkness, secrecy, and cruelty. When a man deliberately turns from all other paths and goes down that one, it is scientific to infer that what attracts him is not knowledge, since there are other paths to that, but cruelty. With so strong and scientific a case against him, it is childish

for him to stand on his honor and reputation and high character and the credit of a noble profession and so forth: he must clear himself either by reason or by experiment, unless he boldly contends that evolution has retained a passion of cruelty in man just because it is indispensable to the fulness of his knowledge.

THOU ART THE MAN

I shall not be at all surprised if what I have written above has induced in sympathetic readers a transport of virtuous indignation at the expense of the medical profession. I shall not damp so creditable and salutary a sentiment; but I must point out that the guilt is shared by all of us. It is not in his capacity of healer and man of science that the doctor vivisects or defends vivisection, but in his entirely vulgar lay capacity. He is made of the same clay as the ignorant, shallow, credulous, half-miseducated, pecuniarily anxious people who call him in when they have tried in vain every bottle and every pill the advertizing druggist can persuade them to buy. The real remedy for vivisection is the remedy for all the mischief that the medical profession and all the other professions are doing: namely, more knowledge. The juries which send the poor Peculiars to prison, and give vivisectionists heavy damages against humane persons who accuse them of cruelty; the editors and councillors and student-led mobs who are striving to make Vivisection one of the watchwords of our civilization, are not doctors: they are the British public, all so afraid to die that they will cling frantically to any idol which promises to cure all their diseases, and crucify anyone who tells them that they must not only die when their time comes, but die like gentlemen. In their paroxysms of cowardice and selfishness they force the doctors to humor their folly and ignorance. How complete and inconsiderate their ignorance is can only be realized

by those who have some knowledge of vital statistics, and of the illusions which beset Public Health legislation.

What the Public Wants and will not Get

The demands of this poor public are not reasonable, but they are quite simple. It dreads disease and desires to be protected against it. But it is poor and wants to be protected cheaply. Scientific measures are too hard to understand, too costly, too clearly tending towards a rise in the rates and more public interference with the insanitary, because insufficiently financed, private house. What the public wants, therefore, is a cheap magic charm to prevent, and a cheap pill or potion to cure all disease. It forces all such charms on the doctors.

The Vaccination Craze

Thus it was really the public and not the medical profession that took up vaccination with irresistible faith, sweeping the invention out of Jenner's hands and establishing it in a form which he himself repudiated. Jenner was not a man of science; but he was not a fool; and when he found that people who had suffered from cowpox either by contagion in the milking shed or by vaccination, were not, as he had supposed, immune from smallpox, he ascribed the cases of immunity which had formerly misled him to a disease of the horse, which, perhaps because we do not drink its milk and eat its flesh, is kept at a greater distance in our imagination than our foster mother the cow. At all events, the public, which had been boundlessly credulous about the cow, would not have the horse on any terms; and to this day the law which prescribes Jennerian vaccination is carried out with an anti-Jennerian inoculation because the public would have it so in spite of Jenner. All the grossest lies and superstitions which have disgraced the vaccination craze were taught to

the doctors by the public. It was not the doctors who first began to declare that all our old men remember the time when almost every face they saw in the street was horribly pitted with smallpox, and that all this disfigurement has vanished since the introduction of vaccination. Jenner himself alluded to this imaginary phenomenon before the introduction of vaccination, and attributed it to the older practice of smallpox inoculation, by which Voltaire, Catherine II and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu so confidently expected to see the disease made harmless. It was not Jenner who set people declaring that smallpox, if not abolished by vaccination, had at least been made much milder: on the contrary, he recorded a pre-vaccination epidemic in which none of the persons attacked went to bed or considered themselves as seriously ill. Neither Jenner, nor any other doctor ever, as far as I know, inculcated the popular notion that everybody got smallpox as a matter of course before vaccination was invented. That doctors get infected with these delusions, and are in their unprofessional capacity as members of the public subject to them like other men, is true; but if we had to decide whether vaccination was first forced on the public by the doctors or on the doctors by the public, we should have to decide against the public.

Statistical Illusions

Public ignorance of the laws of evidence and of statistics can hardly be exaggerated. There may be a doctor here and there who in dealing with the statistics of disease has taken at least the first step towards sanity by grasping the fact that as an attack of even the commonest disease is an exceptional event, apparently overwhelming statistical evidence in favor of any prophylactic can be produced by persuading the public that everybody caught the disease formerly. Thus if a disease is one which normally attacks fifteen per cent of the population, and if the effect of a prophylactic is actually

to increase the proportion to twenty per cent, the publication of this figure of twenty per cent will convince the public that the prophylactic has reduced the percentage by eighty per cent instead of increasing it by five, because the public, left to itself and to the old gentlemen who are always ready to remember, on every possible subject, that things used to be much worse than they are now (such old gentlemen greatly outnumber the laudatores tempori acti), will assume that the former percentage was about 100. The vogue of the Pasteur treatment of hydrophobia, for instance, was due to the assumption by the public that every person bitten by a rabid dog necessarily got hydrophobia. I myself heard hydrophobia discussed in my youth by doctors in Dublin before a Pasteur Institute existed, the subject having been brought forward there by the scepticism of an eminent surgeon as to whether hydrophobia is really a specific disease or only ordinary tetanus induced (as tetanus was then supposed to be induced) by a lacerated wound. There were no statistics available as to the proportion of dog bites that ended in hydrophobia; but nobody ever guessed that the cases could be more than two or three per cent of the bites. On me, therefore, the results published by the Pasteur Institute produced no such effect as they did on the ordinary man who thinks that the bite of a mad dog means certain hydrophobia. It seemed to me that the proportion of deaths among the cases treated at the Institute was rather higher, if anything, than might have been expected had there been no Institute in existence. But to the public every Pasteur patient who did not die was miraculously saved from an agonizing death by the beneficent white magic of that most trusty of all wizards, the man of science.

Even trained statisticians often fail to appreciate the extent to which statistics are vitiated by the unrecorded assumptions of their interpreters. Their attention is too much occupied with the cruder tricks of those who make a corrupt use of statistics for advertizing purposes. There is, for example, the

percentage dodge. In some hamlet, barely large enough to have a name, two people are attacked during a smallpox epidemic. One dies: the other recovers. One has vaccination marks: the other has none. Immediately either the vaccinists or the anti-vaccinists publish the triumphant news that at such and such a place not a single vaccinated person died of smallpox whilst 100 per cent of the unvaccinated perished miserably; or, as the case may be, that 100 per cent of the unvaccinated recovered whilst the vaccinated succumbed to the last man. Or, to take another common instance, comparisons which are really comparisons between two social classes with different standards of nutrition and education are palmed off as comparisons between the results of a certain medical treatment and its neglect. Thus it is easy to prove that the wearing of tall hats and the carrying of umbrellas enlarges the chest, prolongs life, and confers comparative immunity from disease; for the statistics shew that the classes which use these articles are bigger, healthier, and live longer than the class which never dreams of possessing such things. It does not take much perspicacity to see that what really makes this difference is not the tall hat and the umbrella, but the wealth and nourishment of which they are evidence, and that a gold watch or membership of a club in Pall Mall might be proved in the same way to have the like sovereign virtues. A university degree, a daily bath, the owning of thirty pairs of trousers, a knowledge of Wagner's music, a pew in church, anything, in short, that implies more means and better nurture than the mass of laborers enjoy, can be statistically palmed off as a magic-spell conferring all sorts of privileges.

In the case of a prophylactic enforced by law, this illusion is intensified grotesquely, because only vagrants can evade it. Now vagrants have little power of resisting any disease: their death-rate and their case-mortality rate is always high relatively to that of respectable folk. Nothing is easier, therefore, than to prove that compliance with any public regulation

produces the most gratifying results. It would be equally easy even if the regulation actually raised the death-rate provided it did not raise it sufficiently to make the average householder, who cannot evade regulations, die as early as the average vagrant who can.

The Surprises of Attention and Neglect

There is another statistical illusion which is independent of class differences. A common complaint of houseowners is that the Public Health Authorities frequently compel them to instal costly sanitary appliances which are condemned a few years later as dangerous to health, and forbidden under penalties. Yet these discarded mistakes are always made in the first instance on the strength of a demonstration that their introduction has reduced the death-rate. The explanation is simple. Suppose a law were made that every child in the n ion should be compelled to drink a pint of brandy per month, but that the brandy must be administered only when the child was in good health, with its digestion and so forth working normally, and its teeth either naturally or artificially sound. Probably the result would be an immediate and startling reduction in child mortality, leading to further legislation increasing the quantity of brandy to a gallon. Not until the brandy craze had been carried to a point at which the direct harm done by it would outweigh the incidental good, would an anti-brandy party be listened to. That incidental good would be the substitution of attention to the general health of children for the neglect which is now the rule so long as the child is not actually too sick to run about and play as usual. Even if this attention were confined to the children's teeth, there would be an improvement which it would take a good deal of brandy to cancel.

This imaginary case explains the actual case of the sanitary appliances which our local sanitary authorities prescribe today and condemn tomorrow. No sanitary contrivance which

the mind of even the very worst plumber can devize could be as disastrous as that total neglect for long periods which gets avenged by pestilences that sweep through whole continents, like the black death and the cholera. If it were proposed at this time of day to discharge all the sewage of London crude and untreated into the Thames, instead of carrying it, after elaborate treatment, far out into the North Sea, there would be a shriek of horror from all our experts. Yet if Cromwell had done that instead of doing nothing, there would probably have been no Great Plague of London. When the Local Health Authority forces every householder to have his sanitary arrangements thought about and attended to by somebody whose special business it is to attend to such things, then it matters not how erroneous or even directly mischievous may be the specific measures taken: the net result at first is sure to be an improvement. Not until attention has been effectually substituted for neglect as the general rule, will the statistics begin to shew the merits of the particular methods of attention adopted. And as we are far from having arrived at this stage, being as to health legislation only at the beginning of things, we have practically no evidence yet as to the value of methods. Simple and obvious as this is, nobody seems as yet to discount the effect of substituting attention for neglect in drawing conclusions from health statistics. Everything is put to the credit of the particular method employed, although it may quite possibly be raising the death-rate by five per thousand whilst the attention incidental to it is reducing the death-rate fifteen per thousand. The net gain of ten per thousand is credited to the method, and made the excuse for enforcing more of it.

Stealing Credit from Civilization

There is yet another way in which specifics which have no merits at all, either direct or incidental, may be brought into high repute by statistics. For a century past civilization

has been cleaning away the conditions which favor bacterial fevers. Typhus, once rife, has vanished: plague and cholera have been stopped at our frontiers by a sanitary blockade. We still have epidemics of smallpox and typhoid; and dip-theria and scarlet fever are endemic in the slums. Measles, which in my childhood was not regarded as a dangerous disease, has now become so mortal that notices are posted publicly urging parents to take it seriously. But even in these cases the contrast between the death and recovery rates in the rich districts and in the poor ones has led to the general conviction among experts that bacterial diseases are pre-ventible; and they already are to a large extent prevented. The dangers of infection and the way to avoid it are better understood than they used to be. It is barely twenty years since people exposed themselves recklessly to the infection of consumption and pneumonia in the belief that these diseases were not "catching." Nowadays the troubles of con-sumptive patients are greatly increased by the growing disposition to treat them as lepers. No doubt there is a good deal of ignorant exaggeration and cowardly refusal to face a human and necessary share of the risk. That has always been the case. We now know that the medieval horror of leprosy was out of all proportion to the danger of infection, and was accompanied by apparent blindness to the infectiousness of smallpox, which has since been worked up by our disease terrorists into the position formerly held by leprosy. But the scare of infection, though it sets even doctors talking as if the only really scientific thing to do with a fever patient is to throw him into the nearest ditch and pump carbolic acid on him from a safe distance until he is ready to be cremated on the spot, has led to much greater care and cleanliness. And the net result has been a series of victories over disease.

Now let us suppose that in the early nineteenth century somebody had come forward with a theory that typhus fever always begins at the top joint of the little finger; and that

if this joint be amputated immediately after birth, typhus fever will disappear. Had such a suggestion been adopted, the theory would have been triumphantly confirmed; for as a matter of fact, typhus fever *has* disappeared. On the other hand cancer and madness have increased (statistically) to an appalling extent. The opponents of the little finger theory would therefore be pretty sure to allege that the amputations were spreading cancer and lunacy. The vaccination controversy is full of such contentions. So is the controversy as to the docking of horses' tails and the cropping of dogs' ears. So is the less widely known controversy as to circumcision and the declaring certain kinds of flesh unclean by the Jews. To advertize any remedy or operation, you have only to pick out all the most reassuring advances made by civilization, and boldly present the two in the relation of cause and effect: the public will swallow the fallacy without a wry face. It has no idea of the need for what is called a control experiment. In Shakespear's time and for long after it, mummy was a favorite medicament. You took a pinch of the dust of a dead Egyptian in a pint of the hottest water you could bear to drink; and it did you a great deal of good. This, you thought, proved what a sovereign healer mummy was. But if you had tried the control experiment of taking the hot water without the mummy, you might have found the effect exactly the same, and that any hot drink would have done as well.

Biometrika

Another difficulty about statistics is the technical difficulty of calculation. Before you can even make a mistake in drawing your conclusion from the correlations established by your statistics you must ascertain the correlations. When I turn over the pages of Biometrika, a quarterly journal in which is recorded the work done in the field of biological statistics by Professor Karl Pearson and his colleagues, I

am out of my depth at the first line, because mathematics are to me only a concept: I never used a logarithm in my life, and could not undertake to extract the square root of four without misgiving. I am therefore unable to deny that the statistical ascertainment of the correlations between one thing and another must be a very complicated and difficult technical business, not to be tackled successfully except by high mathematicians; and I cannot resist Professor Karl Pearson's immense contempt for, and indignant sense of grave social danger in, the unskilled guesses of the ordinary sociologist.

Now the man in the street knows nothing of Biometrika: all he knows is that "you can prove anything by figures," though he forgets this the moment figures are used to prove anything he wants to believe. If he did take in Biometrika he would probably become abjectly credulous as to all the conclusions drawn in it from the correlations so learnedly worked out; though the mathematician whose correlations would fill a Newton with admiration, may, in collecting and accepting data and drawing conclusions from them, fall into quite crude errors by just such popular oversights as I have been describing.

PATIENT-MADE THERAPEUTICS

To all these blunders and ignorances doctors are no less subject than the rest of us. They are not trained in the use of evidence, nor in biometrics, nor in the psychology of human credulity, nor in the incidence of economic pressure. Further, they must believe, on the whole, what their patients believe, just as they must wear the sort of hat their patients wear. The doctor may lay down the law despotically enough to the patient at points where the patient's mind is simply blank; but when the patient has a prejudice the doctor must either keep it in countenance or lose his patient. If people are persuaded that night air is dangerous to health and that

fresh air makes them catch cold, it will not be possible for a doctor to make his living in private practice if he prescribes ventilation. We have to go back no further than the days of The Pickwick Papers to find ourselves in a world where people slept in four-post beds with curtains drawn closely round to exclude as much air as possible. Had Mr Pickwick's doctor told him that he would be much healthier if he slept on a camp bed by an open window, Mr Pickwick would have regarded him as a crank and called in another doctor. Had he gone on to forbid Mr Pickwick to drink brandy and water whenever he felt chilly, and assured him that if he were deprived of meat or salt for a whole year, he would not only not die, but would be none the worse, Mr Pickwick would have fled from his presence as from that of a dangerous madman. And in these matters the doctor cannot cheat his patient. If he has no faith in drugs or vaccination, and the patient has, he can cheat him with colored water and pass his lancet through the flame of a spirit lamp before scratching his arm. But he cannot make him change his daily habits without knowing it.

The Reforms also come from the Laity

In the main, then, the doctor learns that if he gets ahead of the superstitions of his patients he is a ruined man; and the result is that he instinctively takes care not to get ahead of them. That is why all the changes come from the laity. It was not until an agitation had been conducted for many years by laymen, including quacks and faddists of all kinds, that the public was sufficiently impressed to make it possible for the doctors to open their minds and their mouths on the subject of fresh air, cold water, temperance, and the rest of the new fashions in hygiene. At present the tables have been turned on many old prejudices. Plenty of our most popular elderly doctors believe that cold tubs in the morning are unnatural, exhausting, and rheumatic; that fresh air

is a fad, and that everybody is the better for a glass or two of port wine every day; but they no longer dare say as much until they know exactly where they are; for many very desirable patients in country houses have lately been persuaded that their first duty is to get up at six in the morning and begin the day by taking a walk barefoot through the dewy grass. He who shews the least scepticism as to this practice is at once suspected of being "an old-fashioned doctor," and dismissed to make room for a younger man.

In short, private medical practice is governed not by science but by supply and demand; and however scientific a treatment may be, it cannot hold its place in the market if there is no demand for it; nor can the grossest quackery be kept off the market if there is a demand for it.

Fashions and Epidemics

A demand, however, can be inculcated. This is thoroughly understood by fashionable tradesmen, who find no difficulty in persuading their customers to renew articles that are not worn out and to buy things they do not want. By making doctors tradesmen, we compel them to learn the tricks of trade; consequently we find that the fashions of the year include treatments, operations, and particular drugs, as well as hats, sleeves, ballads, and games. Tonsils, vermiform appendices, uvulas, even ovaries are sacrificed because it is the fashion to get them cut out, and because the operations are highly profitable. The psychology of fashion becomes a pathology; for the cases have every air of being genuine: fashions, after all, are only induced epidemics, proving that epidemics can be induced by tradesmen, and therefore by doctors.

The Doctor's Virtues

It will be admitted that this is a pretty bad state of things. And the melodramatic instinct of the public, always

demanding that every wrong shall have, not its remedy, but its villain to be hissed, will blame, not its own apathy, superstition, and ignorance, but the depravity of the doctors. Nothing could be more unjust or mischievous. Doctors, if no better than other men, are certainly no worse. I was reproached during the performances of The Doctor's Dilemma at the Court Theatre in 1907 because I made the artist a rascal, the journalist an illiterate incapable, and all the doctors "angels." But I did not go beyond the warrant of my own experience. It has been my luck to have doctors among my friends for nearly forty years past (all perfectly aware of my freedom from the usual credulity as to the miraculous powers and knowledge attributed to them); and though I know that there are medical blackguards as well as military, legal, and clerical blackguards (one soon finds that out when one is privileged to hear doctors talking shop among themeslves), the fact that I was no more at a loss for private medical advice and attendance when I had not a penny in my pocket than I was later on when I could afford fees on the highest scale, has made it impossible for me to share that hostility to the doctor as a man which exists and is growing as an inevitable result of the present condition of medical practice. Not that the interest in disease and aberrations which turns some men and women to medicine and surgery is not sometimes as morbid as the interest in misery and vice which turns some others to philanthropy and "rescue work." But the true doctor is inspired by a hatred of ill-health, and a divine impatience of any waste of vital forces. Unless a man is led to medicine or surgery through a very exceptional technical aptitude, or because doctoring is a family tradition, or because he regards it unintelligently as a lucrative and gentlemanly profession, his motives in choosing the career of a healer are clearly generous. However actual practice may disillusion and corrupt him, his selection in the first instance is not a selection of a base character.

The Doctor's Hardships

A review of the counts in the indictment I have brought against private medical practice will shew that they arise out of the doctor's position as a competitive private tradesman: that is, out of his poverty and dependence. And it should be borne in mind that doctors are expected to treat other people specially well whilst themselves submitting to specially inconsiderate treatment. The butcher and baker are not expected to feed the hungry unless the hungry can pay; but a doctor who allows a fellow-creature to suffer or perish without aid is regarded as a monster. Even if we must dismiss hospital service as really venal, the fact remains that most doctors do a good deal of gratuitous work in private practice all through their careers. And in his paid work the doctor is on a different footing to the tradesman. Although the articles he sells, advice and treatment, are the same for all classes, his fees have to be graduated like the income tax. The successful fashionable doctor may weed his poorer patients out from time to time, and finally use the College of Physicians to place it out of his own power to accept low fees; but the ordinary general practitioner never makes out his bills without considering the taxable capacity of his patients.

Then there is the disregard of his own health and comfort which results from the fact that he is, by the nature of his work, an emergency man. We are polite and considerate to the doctor when there is nothing the matter, and we meet him as a friend or entertain him as a guest; but when the baby is suffering from croup, or its mother has a temperature of 104°, or its grandfather has broken his leg, nobody thinks of the doctor except as a healer and savior. He may be hungry, weary, sleepy, run down by several successive nights disturbed by that instrument of torture, the night bell; but who ever thinks of this in the face of sudden sickness or accident? We think no more of the condition of a doctor

attending a case than of the condition of a fireman at a fire. In other occupations night-work is specially recognized and provided for. The worker sleeps all day; has his breakfast in the evening; his lunch or dinner at midnight; his dinner or supper before going to bed in the morning; and he changes to day-work if he cannot stand night-work. But a doctor is expected to work day and night. In practices which consist largely of workmen's clubs, and in which the patients are therefore taken on wholesale terms and very numerous, the unfortunate assistant, or the principal if he has no assistant, often does not undress, knowing that he will be called up before he has snatched an hour's sleep. To the strain of such inhuman conditions must be added the constant risk of infection. One wonders why the impatient doctors do not become savage and unmanageable, and the patient ones imbecile. Perhaps they do, to some extent. And the pay is wretched, and so uncertain that refusal to attend without payment in advance becomes often a necessary measure of self-defence, whilst the County Court has long ago put an end to the tradition that the doctor's fee is an honorarium. Even the most eminent physicians, as such biographies as those of Paget shew, are sometimes miserably, inhumanly poor until they are past their prime.

In short, the doctor needs our help for the moment much more than we often need his. The ridicule of Molière, the death of a well-informed and clever writer like the late Harold Frederic in the hands of Christian Scientists (a sort of sealing with his blood of the contemptuous disbelief in and dislike of doctors he had bitterly expressed in his books), the scathing and quite justifiable exposure of medical practice in the novel by Mr Maarten Maartens entitled The New Religion: all these trouble the doctor very little, and are in any case well set off by the popularity of Sir Luke Fildes' famous picture, and by the verdicts in which juries from time to time express their conviction that the doctor can do no wrong. The real woes of the doctor are the shabby

coat, the wolf at the door, the tyranny of ignorant patients, the work-day of 24 hours, and the uselessness of honestly prescribing what most of the patients really need: that is, not medicine, but money.

THE PUBLIC DOCTOR

What then is to be done?

Fortunately we have not to begin absolutely from the beginning: we already have, in the Medical Officer of Health, a sort of doctor who is free from the worst hardships, and consequently from the worst vices, of the private practitioner. His position depends, not on the number of people who are ill, and whom he can keep ill, but on the number of people who are well. He is judged, as all doctors and treatments should be judged, by the vital statistics of his district. When the death-rate goes up his credit goes down. As every increase in his salary depends on the issue of a public debate as to the health of the constituency under his charge, he has every inducement to strive towards the ideal of a clean bill of health. He has a safe, dignified, responsible, independent position based wholly on the public health; whereas the private practitioner has a precarious, shabby-genteel, irresponsible, servile position, based wholly on the prevalence of illness.

It is true, there are grave scandals in the public medical service. The public doctor may be also a private practitioner eking out his earnings by giving a little time to public work for a mean payment. There are cases in which the position is one which no successful practitioner will accept, and where, therefore, incapables or drunkards get automatically selected for the post, *faute de mieux*; but even in these cases the doctor is less disastrous in his public capacity than in his private one: besides, the conditions which produce these bad cases are doomed, as the evil is now recognized and understood. A popular but unstable remedy is to enable

local authorities, when they are too small to require the undivided time of such men as the Medical Officers of our great municipalities, to combine for public health purposes so that each may share the services of a highly paid official of the best class; but the right remedy is a larger area as the sanitary unit.

Medical Organisation

Another advantage of public medical work is that it admits of organization, and consequently of the distribution of the work in such a manner as to avoid wasting the time of highly qualified experts on trivial jobs. The individualism of private practice leads to an appalling waste of time on trifles. Men whose dexterity as operators or almost divinatory skill in diagnosis are constantly needed for difficult cases, are poulticing whitlows, vaccinating, changing unimportant dressings, prescribing ether drams for ladies with timid leanings towards dipsomania, and generally wasting their time in the pursuit of private fees. In no other profession is the practitioner expected to do all the work involved in it from the first day of his professional career to the last as the doctor is. The judge passes sentence of death; but he is not expected to hang the criminal with his own hands, as he would be if the legal profession were as unorganized as the medical. The bishop is not expected to blow the organ or wash the baby he baptizes. The general is not asked to plan a campaign or conduct a battle at half-past twelve and to play the drum at half-past two. Even if they were, things would still not be as bad as in the medical profession; for in it not only is the first-class man set to do third-class work, but, what is much more terrifying, the third-class man is expected to do first-class work. Every general practitioner is supposed to be capable of the whole range of medical and surgical work at a moment's notice; and the country doctor, who has not a specialist nor a crack

consultant at the end of his telephone, often has to tackle without hesitation cases which no sane practitioner in a town would take in hand without assistance. No doubt this develops the resourcefulness of the country doctor, and makes him a more capable man than his suburban colleague; but it cannot develop the second-class man into a first-class one. If the practice of law not only led to a judge having to hang, but the hangman to judge, or if in the army matters were so arranged that it would be possible for the drummer boy to be in command at Waterloo whilst the Duke of Wellington was playing the drum in Brussels, we should not be consoled by the reflection that our hangmen were thereby made a little more judicial-minded, and our drummers more responsible, than in foreign countries where the legal and military professions recognized the advantages of division of labor.

Under such conditions no statistics as to the graduation of professional ability among doctors are available. Assuming that doctors are normal men and not magicians (and it is unfortunately very hard to persuade people to admit so much and thereby destroy the romance of doctoring) we may guess that the medical profession, like the other professions, consists of a small percentage of highly gifted persons at one end, and a small percentage of altogether disastrous duffers at the other. Between these extremes comes the main body of doctors (also, of course, with a weak and a strong end) who can be trusted to work under regulations with more or less aid from above according to the gravity of the case. Or, to put it in terms of the cases, there are cases that present no difficulties, and can be dealt with by a nurse or student at one end of the scale, and cases that require watching and handling by the very highest existing skill at the other; whilst between come the great mass of cases which need visits from the doctor of ordinary ability and from the chiefs of the profession in the proportion of, say, seven to none, seven to one, three to one, one to one, or, for a

day or two, none to one. Such a service is organized at present only in hospitals; though in large towns the practice of calling in the consultant acts, to some extent, as a substitute for it. But in the latter case it is quite unregulated except by professional etiquet, which, as we have seen, has for its object, not the health of the patient or of the community at large, but the protection of the doctor's livelihood and the concealment of his errors. And as the consultant is an expensive luxury, he is a last resource rather than, as he should be, a matter of course in all cases where the general practitioner is not equal to the occasion: a predicament in which a very capable man may find himself at any time through the cropping up of a case of which he has had no clinical experience.

The Social Solution of the Medical Problem

The social solution of the medical problem, then, depends on that large, slowly advancing, pettishly resisted integration of society called generally Socialism. Until the medical profession becomes a body of men trained and paid by the country to keep the country in health it will remain what it is at present: a conspiracy to exploit popular credulity and human suffering. Already our M.O.H.s (Medical Officers of Health) are in the new position: what is lacking is appreciation of the change, not only by the public but by the private doctors. For, as we have seen, when one of the first-rate posts becomes vacant in one of the great cities, and all the leading M.O.H.s. compete for it, they must appeal to the good health of the cities of which they have been in charge, and not to the size of the incomes the local private doctors are making out of the ill-health of their patients. If a competitor can prove that he has utterly ruined every sort of medical private practice in a large city except obstetric practice and the surgery of accidents, his claims are irresistible; and this is the ideal at which every M.O.H.

should aim. But the profesion at large should none the less welcome him and set its house in order for the social change which will finally be its own salvation. For the M.O.H. as we know him is only the beginning of that army of Public Hygiene which will presently take the place in general interest and honor now occupied by our military and naval forces. It is silly that an Englishman should be more afraid of a German soldier than of a British disease germ, and should clamor for more barracks in the same newspapers that protest against more school clinics, and cry out that if the State fights disease for us it makes us paupers, though they never say that if the State fights the Germans for us it makes us cowards. Fortunately, when a habit of thought is silly it only needs steady treatment by ridicule from sensible and witty people to be put out of countenance and perish. Every year sees an increase in the number of persons employed in the Public Health Service, who would formerly have been mere adventurers in the Private Illness Service. To put it another way, a host of men and women who have now a strong incentive to be mischievous and even murderous rogues will have a much stronger, because a much honester, incentive to be not only good citizens but active benefactors to the community. And they will have no anxiety whatever about their incomes.

The Future of Private Practice

It must not be hastily concluded that this involves the extinction of the private practitioner. What it will really mean for him is release from his present degrading and scientifically corrupting slavery to his patients. As I have already shewn, the doctor who has to live by pleasing his patients in competition with everybody who has walked the hospitals, scraped through the examinations, and bought a brass plate, soon finds himself prescribing water to teetotallers and brandy or champagne jelly to drunkards;

beefsteaks and stout in one house, and "uric acid free" vegetarian diet over the way; shut windows, big fires, and heavy overcoats to old Colonels, and open air and as much nakedness as is compatible with decency to young faddists, never once daring to say either "I dont know," or "I dont agree." For the strength of the doctor's, as of every other man's position when the evolution of social organization at last reaches his profession, will be that he will always have open to him the alternative of public employment when the private employer becomes too tyrannous. And let no one suppose that the words doctor and patient can disguise from the parties the fact that they are employer and employee. No doubt doctors who are in great demand can be as high-handed and independent as employees are in all classes when a dearth in their labor market makes them indispensable; but the average doctor is not in this position: he is struggling for life in an over-crowded profession, and knows well that "a good bedside manner" will carry him to solvency through a morass of illness, whilst the least attempt at plain dealing with people who are eating too much or drinking too much, or frowsting too much (to go no further in the list of intemperances that make up so much of family life) would soon land him in the Bankruptcy Court.

Private practice, thus protected, would itself protect individuals, as far as such protection is possible, against the errors and superstitions of State medicine, which are at worst no worse than the errors and superstitions of private practice, being, indeed, all derived from it. Such monstrosities as vaccination are, as we have seen, founded, not on science, but on half-crowns. If the Vaccination Acts, instead of being wholly repealed as they are already half repealed, were strengthened by compelling every parent to have his child vaccinated by a public officer whose salary was completely independent of the number of vaccinations performed by him, and for whom there was plenty of alternative public health work waiting, vaccination would be dead in two

years, as the vaccinator would not only not gain by it, but would lose credit through the depressing effects on the vital statistics of his district of the illness and deaths it causes, whilst it would take from him all the credit of that freedom from smallpox which is the result of good sanitary administration and vigilant prevention of infection. Such absurd panic scandals as that of the last London epidemic, where a fee of half-a-crown per re-vaccination produced raids on houses during the absence of parents, and the forcible seizure and re-vaccination of children left to answer the door, can be prevented simply by abolishing the half-crown and all similar follies, paying, not for this or that ceremony of witchcraft, but for immunity from disease, and paying, too, in a rational way. The officer with a fixed salary saves himself trouble by doing his business with the least possible interference with the private citizen. The man paid by the job loses money by not forcing his job on the public as often as possible without reference to its results.

THE TECHNICAL PROBLEM

As to any technical medical problem specially involved, there is none. If there were, I should not be competent to deal with it, as I am not a technical expert in medicine: I deal with the subject as an economist, a politician, and a citizen exercising my common sense. Everything that I have said applies equally to all the medical techniques, and will hold good whether public hygiene be based on the poetic fancies of Christian Science, the tribal superstitions of the druggist and the vivisector, or the best we can make of our real knowledge. But I may remind those who confusedly imagine that the medical problem is also the scientific problem, that all problems are finally scientific problems. The notion that therapeutics or hygiene or surgery is any more or less scientific than making or cleaning boots is entertained only by people to whom a man of science is still a magician

who can cure diseases, transmute metals, and enable us to live for ever. It may still be necessary for some time to come to practise on popular credulity, popular love and dread of the marvellous, and popular idolatry, to induce the poor to comply with the sanitary regulations they are too ignorant to understand. As I have elsewhere confessed, I have myself been responsible for ridiculous incantations with burning sulphur, experimentally proved to be quite useless, because poor people are convinced, by the mystical air of the burning and the horrible smell, that it exorcises the demons of smallpox and scarlet fever and makes it safe for them to return to their houses. To assure them that the real secret is sunshine and soap is only to convince them that you do not care whether they live or die, and wish to save money at their expense. So you perform the incantation; and back they go to their houses, satisfied. A religious ceremony —a poetic blessing of the threshold, for instance—would be much better; but unfortunately our religion is weak on the sanitary side. One of the worst misfortunes of Christendom was that reaction against the voluptuous bathing of the imperial Romans which made dirty habits a part of Christian piety, and in some unlucky places (the Sandwich Islands, for example) made the introduction of Christianity also the introduction of disease, because the formulators of the superseded native religion, like Mahomet, had been enlightened enough to introduce as religious duties such sanitary measures as ablution and the most careful and reverent treatment of everything cast off by the human body, even to nail clippings and hairs; and our missionaries thoughtlessly discredited this godly doctrine without supplying its place, which was promptly taken by laziness and neglect. If the priests of Ireland could only be persuaded to teach their flocks that it is a deadly insult to the Blessed Virgin to place her image in a cottage that is not kept to that high standard of Sunday cleanliness to which all her worshippers must believe she is accustomed, and to represent her as being especially

particular about stables because her son was born in one, they might do more in one year than all the Sanitary Inspectors in Ireland could do in twenty; and they could hardly doubt that Our Lady would be delighted. Perhaps they do now-a-days; for Ireland is certainly a transfigured country since my youth as far as clean faces and pinafores can transfigure it. In England, where so many of the inhabitants are too gross to believe in poetic faiths, too respectable to tolerate the notion that the stable at Bethlehem was a common peasant farmer's stable instead of a first-rate racing one, and too savage to believe that anything can really cast out the devil of disease unless it be some terrifying hoodoo of tortures and sinks, the M.O.H. will no doubt for a long time to come have to preach to fools according to their folly, promising miracles, and threatening hideous personal consequences of neglect of by-laws and the like; therefore it will be important that every M.O.H. shall have, with his (or her) other qualifications, a sense of humor, lest he (or she) should come at last to believe all the nonsense that must needs be talked. But he must, in his capacity of an expert advising the authorities, keep the government itself free of superstition. If Italian peasants are so ignorant that the Church can get no hold of them except by miracles, why, miracles there must be. The blood of St Januarius must liquefy whether the Saint is in the humor or not. To trick a heathen into being a dutiful Christian is no worse than to trick a whitewasher into trusting himself in a room where a smallpox patient has lain, by pretending to exorcise the disease with burning sulphur. But woe to the Church if in deceiving the peasant it also deceives itself; for then the Church is lost, and the peasant too, unless he revolt against it. Unless the Church works the pretended miracle painfully against the grain, and is continually urged by its dislike of the imposture to strive to make the peasant susceptible to the true reasons for behaving well, the Church will become an instrument of his corruption and an exploiter of his

ignorance, and will find itself launched upon that persecution of scientific truth of which all priesthoods are accused—and none with more justice than the scientific priesthood.

And here we come to the danger that terrifies so many of us: the danger of having a hygienic orthodoxy imposed on us. But we must face that: in such crowded and poverty-ridden civilizations as ours any orthodoxy is better than laisser-faire. If our population ever comes to consist exclusively of well-to-do, highly cultivated, and thoroughly instructed free persons in a position to take care of themselves, no doubt they will make short work of a good deal of official regulation that is now of life-and-death necessity to us; but under existing circumstances, I repeat, almost any sort of attention that democracy will stand is better than neglect. Attention and activity lead to mistakes as well as to successes; but a life spent in making mistakes is not only more honorable but more useful than a life spent doing nothing. The one lesson that comes out of all our theorizing and experimenting is that there is only one really scientific progressive method; and that is the method of trial and error. If you come to that, what is laisser-faire but an orthodoxy? the most tyrannous and disastrous of all the orthodoxies, since it forbids you even to learn.

The Latest Theories

Medical theories are so much a matter of fashion, and the most fertile of them are modified so rapidly by medical practice and biological research, which are international activities, that the play which furnishes the pretext for this preface is already slightly outmoded, though I believe it may be taken as a faithful record for the year (1906) in which it was begun. I must not expose any professional man to ruin by connecting his name with the entire freedom of criticism which I, as a layman, enjoy; but it will be evident to all experts that my play could not have been written

but for the work done by Sir Almroth Wright in the theory and practice of securing immunization from bacterial diseases by the inoculation of "vaccines" made of their own bacteria: a practice incorrectly called vaccinetherapy (there is nothing vaccine about it) apparently because it is what vaccination ought to be and is not. Until Sir Almroth Wright, following up one of Metchnikoff's most suggestive biological romances, discovered that the white corpuscles or phagocytes which attack and devour disease germs for us do their work only when we butter the disease germs appetizingly for them with a natural sauce which Sir Almroth named opsonin, and that our production of this condiment continually rises and falls rhythmically from negligibility to the highest efficiency, nobody had been able even to conjecture why the various serums that were from time to time introduced as having effected marvellous cures, presently made such direful havoc of some unfortunate patient that they had to be dropped hastily. The quantity of sturdy lying that was necessary to save the credit of inoculation in those days was prodigious; and had it not been for the devotion shewn by the military authorities throughout Europe, who would order the entire disappearance of some disease from their armies, and bring it about by the simple plan of changing the name under which the cases were reported, or for our own Metropolitan Asylums Board, which carefully suppressed all the medical reports that revealed the sometimes quite appalling effects of epidemics of revaccination, there is no saying what popular reaction might not have taken place against the whole immunization movement in therapeutics.

The situation was saved when Sir Almroth Wright pointed out that if you inoculated a patient with pathogenic germs at a moment when his powers of cooking them for consumption by the phagocytes was receding to its lowest point, you would certainly make him a good deal worse and perhaps kill him, whereas if you made precisely the same inoculation

when the cooking power was rising to one of its periodical climaxes, you would stimulate it to still further exertions and produce just the opposite result. And he invented a technique for ascertaining in which phase the patient happened to be at any given moment. The dramatic possibilities of this discovery and invention will be found in my play. But it is one thing to invent a technique: it is quite another to persuade the medical profession to acquire it. Our general practitioners, I gather, simply decline to acquire it, being mostly unable to afford either the acquisition or the practice of it when acquired. Something simple, cheap, and ready at all times for all comers, is, as I have shewn, the only thing that is economically possible in general practice, whatever may be the case in Sir Almroth's famous laboratory in St Mary's Hospital. It would have become necessary to denounce opsonin in the trade papers as a fad and Sir Almroth as a dangerous man if his practice in the laboratory had not led him to the conclusion that the customary inoculations were very much too powerful, and that a comparatively infinitesimal dose would not precipitate a negative phase of cooking activity, and might induce a positive one. And thus it happens that the refusal of our general practitioners to acquire the new technique is no longer quite so dangerous in practice as it was when The Doctor's Dilemma was written: nay, that Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonington's way of administering inoculations as if they were spoonfuls of squills may sometimes work fairly well. For all that, I find Sir Almroth Wright, on the 23rd May 1910, warning the Royal Society of Medicine that "the clinician has not yet been prevailed upon to reconsider his position," which means that the general practitioner ("the doctor," as he is called in our homes) is going on just as he did before, and could not afford to learn or practice a new technique even if he had ever heard of it. To the patient who does not know about it he will say nothing. To the patient who does, he will ridicule it, and disparage Sir

Almroth. What else can he do, except confess his ignorance and starve?

But now please observe how "the whirligig of time brings its revenges." This latest discovery of the remedial virtue of a very very tiny hair of the dog that bit you reminds us, not only of Arndt's law of protoplasmic reaction to stimuli, according to which weak and strong stimuli provoke opposite reactions, but of Hahnemann's homeopathy, which was founded on the fact alleged by Hahnemann that drugs which produce certain symptoms when taken in ordinary perceptible quantities, will, when taken in infinitesimally small quantities, provoke just the opposite symptoms; so that the drug that gives you a headache will also cure a headache if you take little enough of it. I have already explained that the savage opposition which homeopathy encountered from the medical profession was not a scientific opposition; for nobody seems to deny that some drugs act in the alleged manner. It was opposed simply because doctors and apothecaries lived by selling bottles and boxes of doctor's stuff to be taken in spoonfuls or in pellets as large as peas; and people would not pay as much for drops and globules no bigger than pins' heads. Nowadays, however, the more cultivated folk are beginning to be so suspicious of drugs, and the incorrigibly superstitious people so profusely supplied with patent medicines (the medical advice to take them being drapped round the bottle and thrown in for nothing) that homeopathy has become a way of rehabilitating the trade of prescription compounding, and is consequently coming into professional credit. At which point the theory of opsonins comes very opportunely to shake hands with it.

Add to the newly triumphant homeopathist and the opsonist that other remarkable innovator, the Swedish masseur, who does not theorize about you, but probes you all over with his powerful thumbs until he finds out your sore spots and rubs them away, besides cheating you into a little wholesome exercise; and you have nearly everything in medical

practice today that is not flat witchcraft or pure commercial exploitation of human credulity and fear of death. And to them a good deal of vegetarian and teetotal controversy raging round a clamor for scientific eating and drinking, and resulting in little so far except calling digestion Metabolism and dividing the public between the eminent doctor who tells us that we do not eat enough fish, and his equally eminent colleague who warns us that a fish diet must end in leprosy, and you have all that opposes with any sort of countenance the rise of Christian Science with its cathedrals and congregations and zealots and miracles and cures: all very silly, no doubt, but sane and sensible, poetic and hopeful, compared to the pseudo science of the commercial general practitioner, who foolishly clamors for the prosecution and even the execution of the Christian Scientists when their patients die, forgetting the long deathroll of his own patients.

By the time this preface is in print the kaleidoscope may have had another shake; and opsonin may have gone the way of phlogiston at the hands of its own restless discoverer. I will not say that Hahnemann may have gone the way of Diafoirus; for Diafoirus we have always with us. But we shall still pick up all our knowledge in pursuit of some Will o' the Wisp or other. What is called science has always pursued the Elixir of Life and the Philosopher's Stone, and is just as busy after them today as ever it was in the days of Paracelsus. We call them by different names: Immunization or radiotherapy or what not; but the dreams which lure us into the adventures from which we learn are always at bottom the same. Science becomes dangerous only when it imagines that it has reached its goal. What is wrong with priests and popes is that instead of being apostles and saints, they are nothing but empirics who say "I know" instead of "I am learning," and pray for credulity and inertia as wise men pray for scepticism and actively. Such abominations as the Inquisition and the Vaccination Acts are possible only

in the famine years of the soul, when the great vital dogmas of honor, liberty, courage, the kinship of all life, faith that the unknown is greater than the known and is only the As Yet Unknown, and resolution to find a manly highway to it, have been forgotten in a paroxysm of littleness and terror in which nothing is active except concupiscence and the fear of death, playing on which any trader can filch a fortune, any blackguard gratify his cruelty, and any tyrant make us his slaves.

Lest this should seem too rhetorical a conclusion for our professional men of science, who are mostly trained not to believe anything unless it is worded in the jargon of those writers who, because they never really understand what they are trying to say, cannot find familiar words for it, and are therefore compelled to invent a new language of nonsense for every book they write, let me sum up my conclusions as dryly as is consistent with accurate thought and live conviction.

1. Nothing is more dangerous than a poor doctor: not even a poor employer or a poor landlord.

2. Of all the anti-social vested interests the worst is the vested interest in ill-health.

3. Remember that an illness is a misdemeanor; and treat the doctor as an accessory unless he notifies every case to the Public Health Authority.

4. Treat every death as a possible and, under our present system, a probable murder, by making it the subject of a reasonably conducted inquest; and execute the doctor, if necessary, *as* a doctor, by striking him off the register.

5. Make up your mind how many doctors the community needs to keep it well. Do not register more or less than this number; and let registration constitute the doctor a civil servant with a dignified living wage paid out of public funds.

6. Municipalize Harley Street.

7. Treat the private operator exactly as you would treat a private executioner.

8. Treat persons who profess to be able to cure disease as you treat fortune tellers.

9. Keep the public carefully informed, by special statistics and announcements of individual cases, of all illness of doctors or in their families.

10. Make it compulsory for a doctor using a brass plate to have inscribed on it, in addition to the letters indicating his qualifications, the words "Remember that I too am mortal."

11. In legislation and social organization, proceed on the principle that invalids, meaning persons who cannot keep themselves alive by their own activities, cannot, beyond reason, expect to be kept alive by the activity of others. There is a point at which the most energetic policeman or doctor, when called upon to deal with an apparently drowned person, gives up artificial respiration, although it is never possible to declare with certainty, at any point short of decomposition, that another five minutes of the exercise would not effect resuscitation. The theory that every individual alive is of infinite value is legislatively impracticable. No doubt the higher the life we secure to the individual by wise social organization, the greater his value is to the community, and the more pains we shall take to pull him through any temporary danger or disablement. But the man who costs more than he is worth is doomed by sound hygiene as inexorably as by sound economics.

12. Do not try to live for ever. You will not succeed.

13. Use your health, even to the point of wearing it out. That is what it is for. Spend all you have before you die; and do not outlive yourself.

14. Take the utmost care to get well born and well brought up. This means that your mother must have a good doctor. Be careful to go to a school where there is what they call a school clinic, where your nutrition and teeth and eyesight and other matters of importance to you will be attended to. Be particularly careful to have all this done at the expense

of the nation, as otherwise it will not be done at all, the chances being about forty to one against your being able to pay for it directly yourself, even if you know how to set about it. Otherwise you will be what most people are at present: an unsound citizen of an unsound nation, without sense enough to be ashamed or unhappy about it.

1911.

Postscript, 1930. During the years which have elapsed since the foregoing preface was penned, the need for bringing the medical profession under responsible and effective public control has become constantly more pressing as the inevitable collisions between the march of discovery in therapeutic science and the reactionary obsolescence of the General Medical Council have become more frequent and sensational. A later volume in the present edition of my works deals with this development.

G. B. S.

20

THE DOCTOR'S DILEMMA

ACT I

On the 15th June 1903, in the early forenoon, a medical student, surname Redpenny, Christian name unknown and of no importance, sits at work in a doctor's consulting room. He devils for the doctor by answering his letters, acting as his domestic laboratory assistant, and making himself indispensable generally, in return for unspecified advantages involved by intimate intercourse with a leader of his profession, and amounting to an informal apprenticeship and a temporary affiliation. Redpenny is not proud, and will do anything he is asked without reservation of his personal dignity if he is asked in a fellow-creaturely way. He is a wide-open-eyed, ready, credulous, friendly, hasty youth, with his hair and clothes in reluctant transition from the untidy boy to the tidy doctor.

Redpenny is interrupted by the entrance of an old serving-woman who has never known the cares, the preoccupations, the responsibilities, jealousies, and anxieties of personal beauty. She has the complexion of a never-washed gypsy, incurable by any detergent; and she has, not a regular beard and moustaches, which could at least be trimmed and waxed into a masculine presentableness, but a whole crop of small beards and moustaches, mostly springing from moles all over her face. She carries a duster and toddles about meddlesomely, spying out dust so diligently that whilst she is flicking off one speck she is already looking elsewhere for another. In conversation she has the same trick, hardly ever looking at the person she is addressing except when she is excited. She has only one manner, and that is the manner of an old family nurse to a child just after it has learnt to walk. She has used her ugliness to secure indulgences unattainable by Cleopatra or Fair Rosamund, and has the

further great advantage over them that age increases her qualification instead of impairing it. Being an industrious, agreeable, and popular old soul, she is a walking sermon on the vanity of feminine prettiness. Just as Redpenny has no discovered Christian name, she has no discovered surname, and is known throughout the doctor's quarter between Cavendish Square and the Marylebone Road simply as Emmy.

The consulting room has two windows looking on Queen Anne Street. Between the two is a marble-topped console, with haunched gilt legs ending in sphinx claws. The huge pier-glass which surmounts it is mostly disabled from reflection by elaborate painting on its surface of palms, ferns, lilies, tulips, and sunflowers. The adjoining wall contains the fireplace, with two arm-chairs before it. As we happen to face the corner we see nothing of the other two walls. On the right of the fireplace, or rather on the right of any person facing the fireplace, is the door. On its left is the writing-table at which Redpenny sits. It is an untidy table with a microscope, several test tubes, and a spirit lamp standing up through its litter of papers. There is a couch in the middle of the room, at right angles to the console, and parallel to the fireplace. A chair stands between the couch and the window. Another in the corner. Another at the other end of the windowed wall. The windows have green Venetian blinds and rep curtains; and there is a gasalier; but it is a convert to electric lighting. The wall paper and carpets are mostly green, coeval with the gasalier and the Venetian blinds. The house, in fact, was so well furnished in the middle of the XIXth century that it stands unaltered to this day and is still quite presentable.

EMMY [*entering and immediately beginning to dust the couch*] Theres a lady bothering me to see the doctor.

REDPENNY [*distracted by the interruption*] Well, she cant see the doctor. Look here: whats the use of telling you that the doctor cant take any new patients, when the moment a

knock comes to the door, in you bounce to ask whether he can see somebody?

EMMY. Who asked you whether he could see somebody?

REDPENNY. You did.

EMMY. I said theres a lady bothering me to see the doctor. That isnt asking. Its telling.

REDPENNY. Well, is the lady bothering you any reason for you to come bothering me when I'm busy?

EMMY. Have you seen the papers?

REDPENNY. No.

EMMY. Not seen the birthday honors?

REDPENNY [*beginning to swear*] What the—

EMMY. Now, now, ducky!

REDPENNY. What do you suppose I care about the birthday honors? Get out of this with your chattering. Dr Ridgeon will be down before I have these letters ready. Get out.

EMMY. Dr Ridgeon wont never be down any more, young man.

She detects dust on the console and is down on it immediately.

REDPENNY [*jumping up and following her*] What?

EMMY. He's been made a knight. Mind you dont go Dr Ridgeoning him in them letters. Sir Colenso Ridgeon is to be his name now.

REDPENNY. I'm jolly glad.

EMMY. I never was so taken aback. I always thought his great discoveries was fudge (let alone the mess of them) with his drops of blood and tubes full of Maltese fever and the like. Now he'll have a rare laugh at me.

REDPENNY. Serve you right! It was like your cheek to talk to him about science. [*He returns to his table and resumes his writing*].

EMMY. Oh, I dont think much of science; and neither will you when youve lived as long with it as I have. Whats on my mind is answering the door. Old Sir Patrick Cullen has

been here already and left first congratulations—hadnt time to come up on his way to the hospital, but was determined to be first—coming back, he said. All the rest will be here too: the knocker will be going all day. What I'm afraid of is that the doctor'll want a footman like all the rest, now that he's Sir Colenso. Mind: dont you go putting him up to it, ducky; for he'll never have any comfort with anybody but me to answer the door. I know who to let in and who to keep out. And that reminds me of the poor lady. I think he ought to see her. She's just the kind that puts him in a good temper. [*She dusts Redpenny's papers*].

REDPENNY. I tell you he cant see anybody. Do go away, Emmy. How can I work with you dusting all over me like this?

EMMY. I'm not hindering you working—if you call writing letters working. There goes the bell. [*She looks out of the window*]. A doctor's carriage. Thats more congratulations. [*She is going out when Sir Colenso Ridgeon enters*]. Have you finished your two eggs, sonny?

RIDGEON. Yes.

EMMY. Have you put on your clean vest?

RIDGEON. Yes.

EMMY. Thats my ducky diamond! Now keep yourself tidy and dont go messing about and dirtying your hands: the people are coming to congratulate you. [*She goes out*].

Sir Colenso Ridgeon is a man of fifty who has never shaken off his youth. He has the off-handed manner and the little audacities of address which a shy and sensitive man acquires in breaking himself in to intercourse with all sorts and conditions of men. His face is a good deal lined; his movements are slower than, for instance, Redpenny's; and his flaxen hair has lost its lustre; but in figure and manner he is more the young man than the titled physician. Even the lines in his face are those of overwork and restless scepticism, perhaps partly of curiosity and appetite, rather than that of age. Just at present the announcement of his knight-

hood in the morning papers makes him specially self-conscious, and consequently specially off-hand with Redpenny.

RIDGEON. Have you seen the papers? Youll have to alter the name in the letters if you havnt.

REDPENNY. Emmy has just told me. I'm awfully glad. I—

RIDGEON. Enough, young man, enough. You will soon get accustomed to it.

REDPENNY. They ought to have done it years ago.

RIDGEON. They would have; only they couldnt stand Emmy opening the door, I daresay.

EMMY [*at the door, announcing*] Dr Shoemaker. [*She withdraws*].

A middle-aged gentleman, well dressed, comes in with a friendly but propitiatory air, not quite sure of his reception. His combination of soft manners and responsive kindliness, with a certain unseizable reserve and a familiar yet foreign chiselling of feature, reveal the Jew: in this instance the handsome gentlemanly Jew, gone a little pigeon-breasted and stale after thirty, as handsome young Jews often do, but still decidedly good-looking.

THE GENTLEMAN. Do you remember me? Schutzmacher. University College school and Belsize Avenue. Loony Schutzmacher, you know.

RIDGEON. What! Loony! [*He shakes hands cordially*]. Why, man, I thought you were dead long ago. Sit down. [*Schutzmacher sits on the couch: Ridgeon on the chair between it and the window*]. Where have you been these thirty years?

SCHUTZMACHER. In general practice, until a few months ago. Ive retired.

RIDGEON. Well done, Loony, I wish *I* could afford to retire. Was your practice in London?

SCHUTZMACHER. No.

RIDGEON. Fashionable coast practice, I suppose.

SCUTZMACHER. How could I afford to buy a fashionable practice? I hadnt a rap. I set up in a manufacturing town in

the midlands in a little surgery at ten shillings a week.

RIDGEON. And made your fortune?

SCHUTZMACHER. Well, I'm pretty comfortable. I have a place in Hertfordshire besides our flat in town. If you ever want a quiet Saturday to Monday, I'll take you down in my motor at an hour's notice.

RIDGEON. Just rolling in money! I wish you rich g.p.'s would teach me how to make some. Whats the secret of it?

SCHUTZMACHER. Oh, in my case the secret was simple enough, though I suppose I should have got into trouble if it had attracted any notice. And I'm afraid youll think it rather infra dig.

RIDGEON. Oh, I have an open mind. What was the secret?

SCHUTZMACHER. Well, the secret was just two words.

RIDGEON. Not Consultation Free, was it?

SCHUTZMACHER [*shocked*] No, no. Really.

RIDGEON [*apologetic*] Of course not. I was only joking.

SCHUTZMACHER. My two words were simply Cure Guaranteed.

RIDGEON [*admiring*] Cure Guaranteed!

SCHUTZMACHER. Guaranteed. After all, thats what everybody wants from a doctor, isnt it?

RIDGEON. My dear Loony, it was an inspiration. Was it on the brass plate?

SCHUTZMACHER. There was no brass plate. It was a shop window: red, you know, with black lettering. Doctor Leo Schutzmacher, L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S. Advice and medicine sixpence. Cure Guaranteed.

RIDGEON. And the guarantee proved sound nine times out of ten, eh?

SCHUTZMACHER [*rather hurt at so moderate an estimate*] Oh, much oftener than that. You see, most people get well all right if they are careful and you give them a little sensible advice. And the medicine really did them good. Parrish's Chemical Food: phosphates, you know. One tablespoonful to a twelve-ounce bottle of water: nothing better, no matter

what the case is.

RIDGEON. Redpenny: make a note of Parrish's Chemical Food.

SCHUTZMACHER. I take it myself, you know, when I feel run down. Goodbye. You dont mind my calling, do you? Just to congratulate you.

RIDGEON. Delighted, my dear Loony. Come to lunch on Saturday next week. Bring your motor and take me down to Hertford.

SCHUTZMACHER. I will. We shall be delighted. Thank you. Goodbye. [*He goes out with Ridgeon, who returns immediately*].

REDPENNY. Old Paddy Cullen was here before you were up, to be the first to congratulate you.

RIDGEON. Indeed. Who taught you to speak of Sir Patrick Cullen as Old Paddy Cullen, you young ruffian?

REDPENNY. You never call him anything else.

RIDGEON. Not now that I am Sir Colenso. Next thing, you fellows will be calling me old Colly Ridgeon.

REDPENNY. We do, at St Anne's.

RIDGEON. Yach! Thats what makes the medical student the most disgusting figure in modern civilization. No veneration, no manners—no—

EMMY [*at the door, announcing*] Sir Patrick Cullen. [*She retires*].

Sir Patrick Cullen is more than twenty years older than Ridgeon, not yet quite at the end of his tether, but near it and resigned to it. His name, his plain, downright, sometimes rather arid common sense, his large build and stature, the absence of those odd moments of ceremonial servility by which an old English doctor sometimes shews you what the status of the profession was in England in his youth, and an occasional turn of speech, are Irish; but he has lived all his life in England and is thoroughly acclimatized. His manner to Ridgeon, whom he likes, is whimsical and fatherly: to others he is a little gruff and uninviting, apt to substitute

more or less expressive grunts for articulate speech, and generally indisposed, at his age, to make much social effort. He shakes Ridgeon's hand and beams at him cordially and jocularly.

SIR PATRICK. Well, young chap. Is your hat too small for you, eh?

RIDGEON. Much too small. I owe it all to you.

SIR PATRICK. Blarney, my boy. Thank you all the same. [*He sits in one of the armchairs near the fireplace. Ridgeon sits on the couch*]. Ive come to talk to you a bit. [*To Redpenny*] Young man: get out.

REDPENNY. Certainly, Sir Patrick [*He collects his papers and makes for the door*].

SIR PATRICK. Thank you. Thats a good lad. [*Redpenny vanishes*]. They all put up with me, these young chaps, because I'm an old man, a real old man, not like you. Youre only beginning to give yourself the airs of age. Did you ever see a boy cultivating a moustache? Well, a middle-aged doctor cultivating a grey head is much the same sort of spectacle.

RIDGEON. Good Lord! yes: I suppose so. And I thought that the days of my vanity were past. Tell me: at what age does a man leave off being a fool?

SIR PATRICK. Remember the Frenchman who asked his grandmother at what age we get free from the temptations of love. The old woman said she didnt know. [*Ridgeon laughs*]. Well, I make you the same answer. But the world's growing very interesting to me now, Colly.

RIDGEON. You keep up your interest in science, do you?

SIR PATRICK. Lord! yes. Modern science is a wonderful thing. Look at your great discovery! Look at all the great discoveries! Where are they leading to? Why, right back to my poor dear old father's ideas and discoveries. He's been dead now over forty years. Oh, it's very interesting.

RIDGEON. Well, theres nothing like progress, is there?

SIR PATRICK. Dont misunderstand me, my boy. I'm not

belittling your discovery. Most discoveries are made regularly every fifteen years; and it's fully a hundred and fifty since yours was made last. Thats something to be proud of. But your discovery's not new. It's only inoculation. My father practised inoculation until it was made criminal in eighteen-forty. That broke the poor old man's heart, Colly: he died of it. And now it turns out that my father was right after all. Youve brought us back to inoculation.

RIDGEON. I know nothing about smallpox. My line is tuberculosis and typhoid and plague. But of course the principle of all vaccines is the same.

SIR PATRICK. Tuberculosis? M-m-m-m! Youve found out how to cure consumption, eh?

RIDGEON. I believe so.

SIR PATRICK. Ah yes. It's very interesting. What is it the old cardinal says in Browning's play? "I have known four and twenty leaders of revolt." Well, Ive known over thirty men that found out how to cure consumption. Why do people go on dying of it, Colly? Devilment, I suppose. There was my father's old friend George Boddington of Sutton Coldfield. He discovered the open-air cure in eighteen-forty. He was ruined and driven out of his practice for only opening the windows; and now we wont let a consumptive patient have as much as a roof over his head. Oh, it's very very interesting to an old man.

RIDGEON. You old cynic, you dont believe a bit in my discovery.

SIR PATRICK. No, no: I dont go quite so far as that, Colly. But still, you remember Jane Marsh?

RIDGEON. Jane Marsh? No.

SIR PATRICK. You dont!

RIDGEON. No.

SIR PATRICK. You mean to tell me you dont remember the woman with the tuberculous ulcer on her arm?

RIDGEON [*enlightened*] Oh, your washerwoman's daughter. Was her name Jane Marsh? I forgot.

SIR PATRICK. Perhaps you've forgotten also that you undertook to cure her with Koch's tuberculin.

RIDGEON. And instead of curing her, it rotted her arm right off. Yes: I remember. Poor Jane! However, she makes a good living out of that arm now by shewing it at medical lectures.

SIR PATRICK. Still, that wasnt quite what you intended, was it?

RIDGEON. I took my chance of it.

SIR PATRICK. Jane did, you mean.

RIDGEON. Well, it's always the patient who has to take the chance when an experiment is necessary. And we can find out nothing without experiment.

SIR PATRICK. What did you find out from Jane's case?

RIDGEON. I found out that the inoculation that ought to cure sometimes kills.

SIR PATRICK. I could have told you that. Ive tried these modern inoculations a bit myself. Ive killed people with them; and Ive cured people with them; but I gave them up because I never could tell which I was going to do.

RIDGEON [*taking a pamphlet from a drawer in the writing-table and handing it to him*] Read that the next time you have an hour to spare; and youll find out why.

SIR PATRICK [*grumbling and fumbling for his spectacles*] Oh, bother your pamphlets. Whats the practice of it? [*Looking at the pamphlet*] Opsonin? What the devil is opsonin?

RIDGEON. Opsonin is what you butter the disease germs with to make your white blood corpuscles eat them. [*He sits down again on the couch*].

SIR PATRICK. Thats not new. Ive heard this notion that the white corpuscles—what is it that whats his name?—Metchnikoff—calls them?

RIDGEON. Phagocytes.

SIR PATRICK. Aye, phagocytes: yes, yes, yes. Well, I heard this theory that the phagocytes eat up the disease germs years ago: long before you came into fashion.

Besides, they dont always eat them.

RIDGEON. They do when you butter them with opsonin.

SIR PATRICK. Gammon.

RIDGEONS. No: it's not gammon. What it comes to in practice is this. The phagocytes wont eat the microbes unless the microbes are nicely buttered for them. Well, the patient manufactures the butter for himself all right; but my discovery is that the manufacture of that butter, which I call opsonin, goes on in the system by ups and downs—Nature being always rhythmical, you know—and that what the inoculation does is to stimulate the ups or downs, as the case may be. If we had inoculated Jane Marsh when her butter factory was on the up-grade, we should have cured her arm. But we got in on the down-grade and lost her arm for her. I call the up-grade the positive phase and the down-grade the negative phase. Everything depends on your inoculating at the right moment. Inoculate when the patient is in the negative phase and you kill: inoculate when the patient is in the positive phase and you cure.

SIR PATRICK. And pray how are you to know whether the patient is in the positive or the negative phase?

RIDGEON. Send a drop of the patient's blood to the laboratory at St Anne's; and in fifteen minutes I'll give you his opsonin index in figures. If the figure is one, inoculate and cure: if it's under point eight, inoculate and kill. Thats my discovery: the most important that has been made since Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood. My tuberculosis patients dont die now.

SIR PATRICK. And mine do when my inoculation catches them in the negative phase, as you call it. Eh?

RIDGEON. Precisely. To inject a vaccine into a patient without first testing his opsonin is as near murder as a respectable practitioner can get. If I wanted to kill a man I should kill him that way.

EMMY [*looking in*] Will you see a lady that wants her husband's lungs cured?

RIDGEON [*impatiently*] No. Havnt I told you I will see nobody? [*To Sir Patrick*] I live in a state of siege ever since it got about that I'm a magician who can cure consumption with a drop of serum. [*To Emmy*] Dont come to me again about people who have no appointments. I tell you I can see nobody.

EMMY. Well, I'll tell her to wait a bit.

RIDGEON [*furious*] Youll tell her I cant see her, and send her away: do you hear?

EMMY [*unmoved*] Well, will you see Mr Cutler Walpole? He dont want a cure: he only wants to congratulate you.

RIDGEON. Of course. Shew him up. [*She turns to go*] Stop. [*To Sir Patrick*] I want two minutes more with you between ourselves. [*To Emmy*] Emmy: ask Mr Walpole to wait just two minutes, while I finish a consultation.

EMMY. Oh, he'll wait all right. He's talking to the poor lady. [*She goes out*].

SIR PATRICK. Well? what is it?

RIDGEON. Dont laugh at me. I want your advice.

SIR PATRICK. Professional advice?

RIDGEON. Yes. Theres something the matter with me. I dont know what it is.

SIR PATRICK. Neither do I. I suppose youve been sounded.

RIDGEON. Yes, of course. Theres nothing wrong with any of the organs: nothing special, anyhow. But I have a curious aching: I dont know where: I cant localize it. Sometimes I think it's my heart: sometimes I suspect my spine. It doesn't exactly hurt me; but it unsettles me completely. I feel that something is going to happen. And there are other symptoms. Scraps of tunes come into my head that seem to me very pretty, though they're quite commonplace.

SIR PATRICK. Do you hear voices?

RIDGEON. No.

SIR PATRICK. I'm glad of that. When my patients tell me that theyve made a greater discovery than Harvey, and that they hear voices, I lock them up.

RIDGEON. You think I'm mad! Thats just the suspicion that has come across me once or twice. Tell me the truth: I can bear it.

SIR PATRICK. Youre sure there are no voices?

RIDGEON. Quite sure.

SIR PATRICK. Then it's only foolishness.

RIDGEON. Have you ever met anything like it before in your practice?

SIR PATRICK. Oh, yes: often. It's very common between the ages of seventeen and twenty-two. It sometimes comes on again at forty or thereabouts. Youre a bachelor, you see. It's not serious—if youre careful.

RIDGEON. About my food?

SIR PATRICK. No: about your behavior. Theres nothing wrong with your spine; and theres nothing wrong with your heart; but theres something wrong with your common sense. Youre not going to die; but you may be going to make a fool of yourself. So be careful.

RIDGEON. I see you dont believe in my discovery. Well, sometimes I dont believe in it myself. Thank you all the same. Shall we have Walpole up?

SIR PATRICK. Oh, have him up. [*Ridgeon rings*]. He's a clever operator, is Walpole, though he's only one of your chloroform surgeons. In my early days, you made your man drunk; and the porters and students held him down; and you had to set your teeth and finish the job fast. Nowadays you work at your ease; and the pain doesnt come until afterwards, when youve taken your cheque and rolled up your bag and left the house. I tell you, Colly, chloroform has done a lot of mischief. It's enabled every fool to be a surgeon.

RIDGEON [*to Emmy, who answers the bell*] Shew Mr Walpole up.

EMMY. He's talking to the lady.

RIDGEON. [*exasperated*] Did I not tell you—

Emmy goes out without heeding him. He gives it up, with

a shrug, and plants himself with his back to the console, leaning resignedly against it.

SIR PATRICK. I know your Cutler Walpoles and their like. Theyve found out that a man's body's full of bits and scraps of old organs he has no mortal use for. Thanks to chloroform, you can cut half a dozen of them out without leaving him any the worse, except for the illness and the guineas it costs him. I knew the Walpoles well fifteen years ago. The father used to snip off the ends of people's uvulas for fifty guineas, and paint throats with caustic every day for a year at two guineas a time. His brother-in-law extirpated tonsils for two hundred guineas until he took up women's cases at double the fees. Cutler himself worked hard at anatomy to find something fresh to operate on; and at last he got hold of something he calls the nuciform sac, which he's made quite the fashion. People pay him five hundred guineas to cut it out. They might as well get their hair cut for all the difference it makes; but I suppose they feel important after it. You cant go out to dinner now without your neighbor bragging to you of some useless operation or other.

EMMY [*announcing*] Mr Cutler Walpole. [*She goes out*].

Cutler Walpole is an energetic, unhesitating man of forty, with a cleanly modelled face, very decisive and symmetrical about the shortish, salient, rather pretty nose, and the three trimly turned corners made by his chin and jaws. In comparison with Ridgeon's delicate broken lines, and Sir Patrick's softly rugged aged ones, his face looks machine-made and beeswaxed; but his scrutinizing, daring eyes give it life and force. He seems never at a loss, never in doubt: one feels that if he made a mistake he would make it thoroughly and firmly. He has neat, well-nourished hands, short arms, and is built for strength and compactness rather than for height. He is smartly dressed with a fancy waistcoat, a richly colored scarf secured by a handsome ring, ornaments on his watch chain, spats on his shoes, and a general air of the well-to-do sportsman about him. He goes straight across to Ridgeon

and shakes hands with him.

WALPOLE. My dear Ridgeon, best wishes! heartiest congratulations! You deserve it.

RIDGEON. Thank you.

WALPOLE. As a man, mind you. You deserve it as a man. The opsonin is simple rot, as any capable surgeon can tell you; but we're all delighted to see your personal qualities officially recognized. Sir Patrick: how are you? I sent you a paper lately about a little thing I invented: a new saw. For shoulder blades.

SIR PATRICK [*meditatively*] Yes: I got it. It's a good saw: a useful, handy instrument.

WALPOLE [*confidently*] I knew youd see its points.

SIR PATRICK. Yes: I remember that saw sixty-five years ago.

WALPOLE. What!

SIR PATRICK. It was called a cabinetmaker's jimmy then.

WALPOLE. Get out! Nonsense! Cabinetmaker be—

RIDGEON. Never mind him, Walpole. He's jealous.

WALPOLE. By the way, I hope I'm not disturbing you two in anything private.

RIDGEON. No, no. Sit down. I was only consulting him. I'm rather out of sorts. Overwork, I suppose.

WALPOLE [*swiftly*] I know whats the matter with you. I can see it in your complexion. I can feel it in the grip of your hand.

RIDGEON. What is it?

WALPOLE. Blood-poisoning.

RIDGEON. Blood-poisoning! Impossible.

WALPOLE. I tell you, blood-poisoning. Ninety-five per cent of the human race suffer from chronic blood-poisoning, and die of it. It's as simple as A.B.C. Your nuciform sac is full of decaying matter—undigested food and waste products—rank ptomaines. Now you take my advice, Ridgeon. Let me cut it out for you. Youll be another man afterwards.

SIR PATRICK. Dont you like him as he is?

WALPOLE. No I dont. I dont like any man who hastnt a healthy circulation. I tell you this: in an intelligently governed country people wouldnt be allowed to go about with nuciform sacs, making themselves centres of infection. The operation ought to be compulsory: it's ten times more important than vaccination.

SIR PATRICK. Have you had your own sac removed, may I ask?

WALPOLE [*triumphantly*] I havnt got one. Look at me! Ive no symptoms. I'm as sound as a bell. About five per cent of the population havnt got any; and I'm one of the five per cent. I'll give you an instance. You know Mrs Jack Foljambe: the smart Mrs Foljambe? I operated at Easter on her sister-in-law, Lady Gorran, and found she had the biggest sac I ever saw: it held about two ounces. Well, Mrs Foljambe had the right spirit—the genuine hygienic instinct. She couldnt stand her sister-in-law being a clean, sound woman, and she simply a whited sepulchre. So she insisted on my operating on her, too. And by George, sir, she hadnt any sac at all. Not a trace! Not a rudiment!! I was so taken aback—so interested, that I forgot to take the sponges out, and was stitching them up inside her when the nurse missed them. Somehow, I'd made sure she'd have an exceptionally large one. [*He sits down on the couch, squaring his shoulders and shooting his hands out of his cuffs as he sets his knuckles akimbo*].

EMMY [*looking in*] Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonington.

A long and expectant pause follows this announcement. All look to the door; but there is no Sir Ralph.

RIDGEON [*at last*] Where is he?

EMMY [*looking back*] Drat him, I thought he was following me. He's stayed down to talk to that lady.

RIDGEON [*exploding*] I told you to tell that lady—[*Emmy vanishes*].

WALPOLE [*jumping up again*] Oh, by the way, Ridgeon, that reminds me. Ive been talking to that poor girl. It's her

husband; and she thinks it's a case of consumption: the usual wrong diagnosis: these damned general practitioners ought never to be allowed to touch a patient except under the orders of a consultant. She's been describing his symptoms to me; and the case is as plain as a pikestaff: bad blood-poisoning. Now she's poor. She can afford to have him operated on. Well, you send him to me: I'll do it for nothing. Theres room for him in my nursing home. I'll put him straight, and feed him up and make her happy. I like making people happy. [*He goes to the chair near the window*].

EMMY [*looking in*] Here he is.

Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonington wafts himself into the room. He is a tall man, with a head like a tall and slender egg. He has been in his time a slender man; but now, in his sixth decade, his waistcoat has filled out somewhat. His fair eyebrows arch goodnaturedly and uncritically. He has a most musical voice; his speech is a perpetual anthem; and he never tires of the sound of it. He radiates an enormous self-satisfaction, cheering, reassuring, healing by the mere incompatibility of disease or anxiety with his welcome presence. Even broken bones, it is said, have been known to unite at the sound of his voice; he is a born healer, as independent of mere treatment and skill as any Christian scientist. When he expands into oratory or scientific exposition, he is as energetic as Walpole; but it is with a bland, voluminous, atmospheric energy, which envelops its subject and its audience, and makes interruption or inattention impossible, and imposes veneration and credulity on all but the strongest minds. He is known in the medical world as B. B.; and the envy roused by his success in practice is softened by the conviction that he is, scientifically considered, a colossal humbug: the fact being that, though he knows just as much (and just as little) as his contemporaries, the qualifications that pass muster in common men reveal their weakness when hung on his egregious personality.

B. B. Aha! Sir Colenso. Sir Colenso, eh? Welcome to the order of knighthood.

RIDGEON [*shaking hands*] Thank you, B. B.

B. B. What! Sir Patrick! And how are we today? a little chilly? a little stiff? but hale and still the cleverest of us all. [*Sir Patrick grunts*]. What! Walpole! the absent-minded beggar: eh?

WALPOLE. What does that mean?

B. B. Have you forgotten the lovely opera singer I sent you to have that growth taken off her vocal cords?

WALPOLE [*springing to his feet*] Great heavens, man, you dont mean to say you sent her for a throat operation!

B. B. [*archly*] Aha! Ha ha! Aha [*trilling like a lark as he shakes his finger at Walpole*]. You removed her nuciform sac. Well, well! force of habit! force of habit! Never mind, ne-e-e-ver mind. She got back her voice after it, and thinks you the greatest surgeon alive; and so you are, so you are, so you are.

WALPOLE [*in a tragic whisper, intensely serious*] Blood-poisoning. I see. I see. [*He sits down again*].

SIR PATRICK. And how is a certain distinguished family getting on under your care, Sir Ralph?

B. B. Our friend Ridgeon will be gratified to hear that I have tried his opsonin treatment on little Prince Henry with complete success.

RIDGEON [*startled and anxious*] But how—

B. B. [*continuin*] I suspected typhoid: the head gardiner's boy had it; so I just called at St Anne's one day and got a tube of your very excellent serum. You were out, unfortunately.

RIDGEON. I hope they explained to you carefully—

B. B. [*waving away the absurd suggestion*] Lord bless you, my dear fellow, I didnt need any explanations. I'd left my wife in the carriage at the door; and I'd no time to be taught my business by your young chaps. I know all about it. Ive handled these anti-toxins ever since they first came out.

RIDGEON. But theyre not anti-toxins; and theyre dangerous unless you use them at the right time.

B. B. Of course they are. Everything is dangerous unless you take it at the right time. An apple at breakfast does you good: an apple at bedtime upsets you for a week. There are only two rules for anti-toxins. First, dont be afraid of them: second, inject them a quarter of an hour before meals, three times a day.

RIDGEON. [*appalled*] Great heavens, B. B., no, no, no.

B. B. [*sweeping on irresistibly*] Yes, yes, yes, Colly. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, you know. It was an immense success. It acted like magic on the little prince. Up went his temperature; off to bed I packed him; and in a week he was all right again, and absolutely immune from typhoid for the rest of his life. The family were very nice about it: their gratitude was quite touching; but I said they owed it all to you, Ridgeon; and I am glad to think that your knighthood is the result.

RIDGEON. I am deeply obliged to you. [*Overcome, he sits down on the chair near the couch*].

B. B. Not at all, not at all. Your own merit. Come! come! come! dont give way.

RIDGEON. It's nothing. I was a little giddy just now. Overwork, I suppose.

WALPOLE. Blood-poisoning.

B. B. Overwork! Theres no such thing. I do the work of ten men. Am I giddy? No. NO. If youre not well, you have a disease. It may be a slight one; but it's a disease. And what is a disease? The lodgment in the system of a pathogenic germ, and the multiplication of that germ. What is the remedy? A very simple one. Find the germ and kill it.

SIR PATRICK. Suppose theres no germ?

B. B. Impossible, Sir Patrick: there must be a germ: else-how could the patient be ill?

SIR PATRICK. Can you shew me the germ of overwork?

B. B. No; but why? Why? Because, my dear Sir Patrick,

though the germ is there, it's invisible. Nature has given it no danger signal for us. These germs—these bacilli—are translucent bodies, like glass, like water. To make them visible you must stain them. Well, my dear Paddy, do what you will, some of them wont stain. They wont take cochineal: they wont take methylene blue: they wont take gentian violet: they wont take any coloring matter. Consequently, though we know, as scientific men, that they exist, we cannot see them. But can you disprove their existence? Can you conceive the disease existing without them? Can you, for instance, shew me a case of diphtheria without the bacillus?

SIR PATRICK. No; but I'll shew you the same bacillus, without the disease, in your own throat.

B. B. No, not the same, Sir Patrick. It is an entirely different bacillus; only the two are, unfortunately, so exactly alike that you cannot see the difference. You must understand, my dear Sir Patrick, that every one of these interesting little creature has an imitator. Just as men imitate each other, germs imitate each other. There is the genuine diphtheria bacillus discovered by Lœffler; and there is the pseudo-bacillus, exactly like it, which you could find, as you say, in my own throat.

SIR PATRICK. And how do you tell one from the other?

B. B. Well, obviously, if the bacillus is the genuine Lœffler, you have diphtheria; and if it's the pseudo-bacillus, youre quite well. Nothing simpler. Science is always simple and always profound. It is only the half-truths that are dangerous. Ignorant faddists pick up some superficial information about germs; and they write to the papers and try to discredit science. They dupe and mislead many honest and worthy people. But science has a perfect answer to them on every point.

A little learning is a dangerous thing:
Drink deep; or taste not the Pierian spring.

I mean no disrespect to your generation, Sir Patrick: some of you old stagers did marvels through sheer professional intuition and clinical experience; but when I think of the average men of your day, ignorantly bleeding and cupping and purging, and scattering germs over their patients from their clothes and instruments, and contrast all that with the scientific certainty and simplicity of my treatment of the little prince the other day, I cant help being proud of my own generation: the men who were trained on the germ theory, the veterans of the great struggle over Evolution in the seventies. We may have our faults; but at least we are men of science. That is why I am taking up your treatment, Ridgeon, and pushing it. It's scientific. [*He sits down on the chair near the couch*].

EMMY [*at the door, announcing*] Dr Blenkinsop.

Dr Blenkinsop is in very different case from the others. He is clearly not a prosperous man. He is flabby and shabby, cheaply fed and cheaply clothed. He has the lines made by a conscience between his eyes, and the lines made by continual money worries all over his face, cut all the deeper as he has seen better days, and hails his well-to-do colleagues as their contemporary and old hospital friend, though even in this he has to struggle with the diffidence of poverty and relegation to the poorer middle class.

RIDGEON. How are you, Blenkinsop?

BLENKINSOP. Ive come to offer my humble congratulations. Oh dear! all the great guns are before me.

B. B. [*patronizing, but charming*] How d'ye do, Blenkinsop? How d'ye do?

BLENKINSOP. And Sir Patrick, too [*Sir Patrick grunts*].

RIDGEON. Youve met Walpole, of course?

WALPOLE. How d'ye do?

BLENKINSOP. It's the first time Ive had that honor. In my poor little practice there are no chances of meeting you great men. I know nobody but the St Anne's men of my own day. [*To Ridgeon*] And so youre Sir Colenso. How does it feel?

RIDGEON. Foolish at first. Dont take any notice of it.

BLENKINSOP. I'm ashamed to say I havnt a notion what your great discovery is; but I congratulate you all the same for the sake of old times.

B. B. [*shocked*] But, my dear Blenkinsop, you used to be rather keen on science.

BLENKINSOP. Ah, I used to be a lot of things. I used to have two or three decent suits of clothes, and flannels to go up the river on Sundays. Look at me now: this is my best; and it must last til Christmas. What can I do? Ive never opened a book since I was qualified thirty years ago. I used to read the medical papers at first; but you know how soon a man drops that; besides, I cant afford them; and what are they after all but trade papers, full of advertisements? Ive forgotten all my science: whats the use of my pretending I havnt? But I have great experience: clinical experience; and bedside experience is the main thing, isnt it?

B. B. No doubt; always provided, mind you, that you have a sound scientific theory to correlate your observations at the bedside. Mere experience by itself is nothing. If I take my dog to the bedside with me, he sees what I see. But he learns nothing from it. Why? Because he's not a scientific dog.

WALPOLE. It amuses me to hear you physicians and general practitioners talking about clinical experience. What do you see at the bedside but the outside of the patient? Well: it isnt his outside thats wrong, except perhaps in skin cases. What you want is a daily familiarity with people's insides; and that you can only get at the operating table. I know what I'm talking about: Ive been a surgeon and a consultant for twenty years; and Ive never known a general

practitioner right in his diagnosis yet. Bring them a perfectly simple case; and they diagnose cancer, and arthritis, and appendicitis, and every other itis, when any really experienced surgeon can see that it's a plain case of blood-poisoning.

BLENKINSOP. Ah, it's easy for you gentlemen to talk; but what would you say if you had my practice? Except for the workmen's clubs, my patients are all clerks and shopmen. They darent be ill: they cant afford it. And when they break down, what can I do for them? You can send your people to St Moritz or to Egypt, or recommend horse exercise or motoring or champagne jelly or complete change and rest for six months. *I* might as well order my people a slice of the moon. And the worst of it is, I'm too poor to keep well myself on the cooking I have to put up with. Ive such a wretched digestion; and I look it. How am I to inspire confidence? [*He sits disconsolately on the couch*].

RIDGEON [*restlessly*] Dont, Blenkinsop: it's too painful. The most tragic thing in the world is a sick doctor.

WALPOLE. Yes, by George: it's like a bald-headed man trying to sell a hair restorer. Thank God I'm a surgeon!

B. B. [*sunnily*] I am never sick. Never had a day's illness in my life. Thats what enables me to sympathize with my patients.

WALPOLE. [*interested*] What! youre never ill!

B. B. Never.

WALPOLE. Thats interesting. I believe you have no nuciform sac. If you ever do feel at all queer, I should very much like to have a look.

B. B. Thank you, my dear fellow but I'm too busy just now.

RIDGEON. I was just telling them when you came in, Blenkinsop, that I have worked myself out of sorts.

BLENKINSOP. Well, it seems presumptuous of me to offer a prescription to a great man like you; but still I have great experience; and if I might recommend a pound of ripe greengages every day half an hour before lunch, I'm

sure youd find a benefit. Theyre very cheap.

RIDGEON. What do you say to that, B. B.?

B. B. [*encouragingly*] Very sensible, Blenkinsop: very sensible indeed. I'm delighted to see that you disapprove of drugs.

SIR PATRICK [*grunts*]!

B. B. [*archly*] Aha! Haha! Did I hear from the fireside armchair the bow-wow of the old school defending its drugs? Ah, believe me, Paddy, the world would be healthier if every chemist's shop in England were demolished. Look at the papers! full of scandalous advertisements of patent medicines! a huge commercial system of quackery and poison. Well, whose fault is it? Ours. I say, ours. We set the example. We spread the superstition. We taught the people to believe in bottles of doctor's stuff; and now they buy it at the stores instead of consulting a medical man.

WALPOLE. Quite true. Ive not prescribed a drug for the last fifteen years.

B. B. Drugs can only repress symptoms: they cannot eradicate disease. The true remedy for all diseases is Nature's remedy. Nature and Science are at one, Sir Patrick, believe me; though you were taught differently. Nature has provided, in the white corpuscles as you call them—in the phagocytes as we call them—a natural means of devouring and destroying all disease germs. There is at bottom only one genuinely scientific treatment for all diseases, and that is to stimulate the phagocytes. Stimulate the phagocytes. Drugs are a delusion. Find the germ of the disease; prepare from it a suitable anti-toxin; inject it three times a day quarter of an hour before meals; and what is the result? The phagocytes are stimulated; they devour the disease; and the patient recovers—unless, of course, he's too far gone. That, I take it, is the essence of Ridgeon's discovery.

SIR PATRICK [*dreamily*] As I sit here, I seem to hear my poor old father talking again.

B. B. [*rising in incredulous amazement*] Your father! But

Lord bless my soul, Paddy, your father must have been an older man than you.

SIR PATRICK. Word for word almost, he said what you say. No more drugs. Nothing but inoculation.

B. B. [*almost contemptuously*] Inoculation! Do you mean smallpox inoculation?

SIR PATRICK. Yes. In the privacy of our family circle, sir, my father used to declare his belief that smallpox inoculation was good, not only for smallpox, but for all fevers.

B. B. [*suddenly rising to the new idea with immense interest and excitement*] What! Ridgeon: did you hear that? Sir Patrick: I am more struck by what you have just told me than I can well express. Your father, sir, anticipated a discovery of my own. Listen, Walpole. Blenkinsop: attend one moment. You will all be intensely interested in this. I was put on the track by accident. I had a typhoid case and a tetanus case side by side in the hospital: a beadle and a city missionary. Think of what that meant for them, poor fellows! Can a beadle be dignified with typhoid? Can a missionary be eloquent with lockjaw? No. NO. Well, I got some typhoid anti-toxin from Ridgeon and a tube of Muldooley's anti-tetanus serum. But the missionary jerked all my things off the table in one of his paroxysms; and in replacing them I put Ridgeon's tube where Muldooley's ought to have been. The consequence was that I inoculated the typhoid case for tetanus and the tetanus case for typhoid. [*The doctors look greatly concerned. B. B., undamped, smiles triumphantly*]. Well, they recovered. THEY RECOVERED. Except for a touch of St Vitus's dance the missionary's as well today as ever; and the beadle's ten times the man he was.

BLENKINSOP. Ive known things like that happen. They cant be explained.

B. B. [*severely*] Blenkinsop: there is nothing that cannot be explained by science. What did I do? Did I fold my hands helplessly and say that the case could not be explained?

By no means. I sat down and used my brains. I thought the case out on scientific principles. I asked myself why didnt the missionary die of typhoid on top of tetanus, and the beadle of tetanus on top of typhoid? Therés a problem for you, Ridgeon. Think, Sir Patrick. Reflect, Blenkinsop. Look at it without prejudice, Walpole. What is the real work of the anti-toxin? Simply to stimulate the phagocytes. Very well. But so long as you stimulate the phagocytes, what does it matter which particular sort of serum you use for the purpose? Haha! Eh? Do you see? Do you grasp it? Ever since that Ive used all sorts of anti-toxins absolutely indiscriminately, with perfectly satisfactory results. I inoculated the little prince with your stuff, Ridgeon, because I wanted to give you a lift; but two years ago I tried the experiment of treating a scarlet fever case with a sample of hydrophobia serum from the Pasteur Institute, and it answered capitally. It stimulated the phagocytes; and the phagocytes did the rest. That is why Sir Patrick's father found that inoculation cured all fevers. It stimulated the phagocytes. [*He throws himself into his chair, exhausted with the triumph of his demonstration, and beams magnificently on them*].

EMMY [*looking in*] Mr. Walpole: your motor's come for you; and it's frightening Sir Patrick's horses; so come along quick.

WALPOLE [*rising*] Goodbye, Ridgeon.

RIDGEON. Goodbye; and many thanks.

B. B. You see my point, Walpole?

EMMY. He cant wait, Sir Ralph. The carriage will be into the area if he dont come.

WALPOLE. I'm coming. [*To B. B.*] Theres nothing in your point: phagocytosis is pure not: the cases are all blood-poisoning; and the knife is the real remedy. Bye-bye, Sir Paddy. Happy to have met you, Mr Blenkinsop. Now, Emmy. [*He goes out, followed by Emmy*].

B. B. [*sadly*] Walpole has no intellect. A mere surgeon:

Wonderful operator; but, after all, what is operating? Only manual labor. Brain—BRAIN remains master of the situation. The nuciform sac is utter nonsense: theres no such organ. It's a mere accidental kink in the membrane, occurring in perhaps two-and-a-half per cent of the population. Of course I'm glad for Walpole's sake that the operation is fashionable; for he's a dear good fellow; and after all, as I always tell people, the operation will do them no harm: indeed, Ive known the nervous shake-up and the fortnight in bed do people a lot of good after a hard London season; but still it's a shocking fraud. [*Rising*] Well, I must be toddling. Goodbye, Paddy [*Sir Patrick grunts*] goodbye, goodbye. Goodbye, my dear Blenkinsop, goodbye! Goodbye, Ridgeon. Dont fret about your health: you know what to do: if your liver is sluggish, a little mercury never does any harm. If you feel restless, try bromide. If that doesnt answer, a stimulant, you know: a little phosphorus and strychnine. If you cant sleep, trional, trional, trion—

SIR PATRICK [*dryly*] But no drugs, Colly, remember that.

B. B. [*firmly*] Certainly not. Quite right, Sir Patrick. As temporary expedients, of course; but as treatment, no, NO. Keep away from the chemist's shop, my dear Ridgeon, whatever you do.

RIDGEON [*going to the door with him*] I will. And thank you for the knighthood. Goodbye.

B. B. [*stopping at the door, with the beam in his eye twinkling a little*] By the way, who's your patient?

RIDGEON. Who?

B. B. Downstairs. Charming woman. Tuberculous husband.

RIDGEON. Is she there still?

EMMY [*looking in*] Come on, Sir Ralph: your wife's waiting in the carriage.

B. B. [*suddenly sobered*] Oh! Goodbye. [*He goes out almost precipitately*].

RIDGEON. Emmy: is that woman there still? If so, tell her once for all that I cant and wont see her. Do you hear?

EMMY. Oh, she aint in a hurry: she doesnt mind how long she waits. [*She goes out*].

BLENKINSOP. I must be off, too: every half-hour I spend away from my work costs me eighteenpence. Goodbye, Sir Patrick.

SIR PATRICK. Goodbye. Goodbye.

RIDGEON. Come to lunch with me some day this week.

BLENKINSOP. I cant afford it, dear boy; and it would put me off my own food for a week. Thank you all the same.

RIDGEON. [*uneasy at Blenkinsop's poverty*] Can I do nothing for you?

BLENKINSOP. Well, if you have an old frock-coat to spare? you see what would be an old one for you would be a new one for me; so remember me the next time you turn out your wardrobe. Goodbye. [*He hurries out*].

RIDGEON [*looking after him*] Poor chap! [*Turning to Sir Patrick*] So thats why they made me a knight! And thats the medical profession!

SIR PATRICK. And a very good profession, too, my lad. When you know as much as I know of the ignorance and superstition of the patients, youll wonder that we're half as good as we are.

RIDGEON. We're not a profession: we're a conspiracy.

SIR PATRICK. All professions are conspiracies against the laity. And we cant all be geniuses like you. Every fool can get ill; but every fool cant be a good doctor: there are not enough good ones to go round. And for all you know, Bloomfield Bonington kills less people than you do.

RIDGEON. Oh, very likely. But he really ought to know the difference between a vaccine and an anti-toxin. Stimulate the phagocytes! The vaccine doesnt affect the phagocytes at all. He's all wrong: hopelessly, dangerously wrong. To put a tube of serum into his hands is murder: simple murder.

EMMY [*returning*] Now, Sir Patrick. How long more are you going to keep them horses standing in the draught?

SIR PATRICK. Whats that to you, you old catamaran?

EMMY. Come, come, now! none of your temper to me. And it's time for Colly to get to his work.

RIDGEON. Behave yourself, Emmy. Get out.

EMMY. Oh, I learnt how to behave myself before I learnt you to do it. I know what doctors are: sitting talking together about themselves when they ought to be with their poor patients. And I know what horses are, Sir Patrick. I was brought up in the country. Now be good; and come along.

SIR PATRICK. [*rising*] Very well, very well, very well. Good-bye, Colly. [*He pats Ridgeon on the shoulder and goes out, turning for a moment at the door to look meditatively at Emmy and say, with grave conviction*] You are an ugly old devil, and no mistake.

EMMY [*highly indignant, calling after him*] Youre no beauty yourself. [*To Ridgeon, much flustered*] Theyve no manners: they think they can say what they like to me; and you set them on, you do. I'll teach them their places. Here now: are you going to see that poor thing or are you not?

RIDGEON. I tell you for the fiftieth time I wont see anybody. Send her away.

EMMY. Oh, I'm tired of being told to send her away. What good will that do her?

RIDGEON. Must I get angry with you, Emmy?

EMMY [*coaxing*] Come now: just see her for a minute to please me: theres a good boy. She's given me half-a-crown. She thinks it's life and death to her husband for her to see you.

RIDGEON. Values her husband's life at half-a-crown!

EMMY. Well, it's all she can afford, poor lamb. Them others think nothing of half-a-sovereign just to talk about themselves to you, the sluts! Besides, she'll put you in a good temper for the day, because it's a good deed to see her; and she's the sort that gets round you.

RIDGEON. Well, she hasnt done so badly. For half-a-crown she's had a consultation with Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonington and Cutler Walpole. Thats six guineas' worth to start

with. I daresay she's consulted Blenkinsop too: thats another eighteenpence.

EMMY. Then youll see her for me, wont you?

RIDGEON. Oh, send her up and be hanged. [*Emmy trots out, satisfied. Ridgeon calls*] Redpenny!

REDPENNY [*appearing at the door*] What is it?

RIDGEON. Theres a patient coming up. If she hasnt gone in five minutes, come in with an urgent call from the hospital for me. You understand: she's to have a strong hint to go.

REDPENNY. Right O! [*He vanishes*].

Ridgeon goes to the glass, and arranges his tie a little.

EMMY [*announcing*] Mrs Doobidad [*Ridgeon leaves the glass and goes to the writing-table*].

The Lady comes in. Emmy goes out and shuts the door. Ridgeon, who has put on an impenetrable and rather distant professional manner, turns to the lady, and invites her, by a gesture, to sit down on the couch.

Mrs Dubedat is beyond all demur an arrestingly good-looking young woman. She has something of the grace and romance of a wild creature, with a good deal of the elegance and dignity of a fine lady. Ridgeon, who is extremely susceptible to the beauty of women, instinctively assumes the defensive at once, and hardens his manner still more. He has an impression that she is very well dressed; but she has a figure on which any dress would look well, and carries herself with the unaffected distinction of a woman who has never in her life suffered from those doubts and fears as to her social position which spoil the manners of most middling people. She is tall, slender, and strong; has dark hair, dressed so as to look like hair and not like a bird's nest or a pantaloon's wig (fashion wavering just then between these two models); has unexpectedly narrow, subtle, dark-fringed eyes that alter her expression disturbingly when she is excited and flashes them wide open; is softly impetuous in her speech and swift in her movements; and is just now in mortal anxiety. She carries a portfolio.

MRS DUBEDAT [*in low urgent tones*] Doctor—

RIDGEON [*curtly*] Wait. Before you begin, let me tell you at once that I can do nothing for you. My hands are full. I sent you that message by my old servant. You would not take that answer.

MRS DUBEDAT. How could I?

RIDGEON. You bribed her.

MRS DUBEDAT. I—

RIDGEON. That doesnt matter. She coaxed me to see you. Well, you must take it from me now that with all the good will in the world, I cannot undertake another case.

MRS DUBEDAT. Doctor: you must save my husband. You must. When I explain to you, you will see that you must. It is not an ordinary case, not like any other case. He is not like anybody else in the world: oh, believe me, he is not. I can prove it to you: [*fingering her portfolio*] I have brought some things to shew you. And you can save him: the papers say you can.

RIDGEON. Whats the matter? Tuberculosis?

MRS DUBEDAT. Yes. His left lung—

RIDGEON. Yes: you neednt tell me about that.

MRS DUBEDAT. You can cure him, if only you will. It is true that you can, isnt it? [*In great distress*] Oh, tell me, please.

RIDGEON [*warningly*] You are going to be quiet and self-possessed, arnt you?

MRS DUBEDAT. Yes. I beg your pardon. I know I shouldnt —[*Giving way again*] Oh, please, say that you can; and then I shall be all right.

RIDGEON [*huffily*] I am not a curemonger: if you want cures, you must go to the people who sell them. [*Recovering himself, ashamed of the tone of his own voice*] But I have at the hospital ten tuberculous patients whose lives I believe I can save.

MRS DUBEDAT. Thank God!

RIDGEON. Wait a moment. Try to think of those ten

patients as ten shipwrecked men on a raft—a raft that is barely large enough to save them—that will not support one more. Another head bobs up through the waves at the side. Another man begs to be taken aboard. He implores the captain of the raft to save him. But the captain can only do that by pushing one of his ten off the raft and drowning him to make room for the new comer. That is what you are asking me to do.

MRS DUBEDAT. But how can that be? I dont understand. Surely—

RIDGEON. You must take my word for it that it is so. My laboratory, my staff, and myself are working at full pressure. We are doing our utmost. The treatment is a new one. It takes time, means, and skill; and there is not enough for another case. Our ten cases are already chosen cases. Do you understand what I mean by chosen?

MRS DUBEDAT. Chosen. No: I cant understand.

RIDGEON [*sternly*] You must understand. Youve got to understand and to face it. In every single one of those ten cases I have had to consider, not only whether the man could be saved, but whether he was worth saving. There were fifty cases to choose from; and forty had to be condemned to death. Some of the forty had young wives and helpless children. If the hardness of their cases could have saved them they would have been saved ten times over. Ive no doubt your case is a hard one: I can see the tears in your eyes [*she hastily wipes her eyes*]: I know that you have a torrent of entreaties ready for me the moment I stop speaking; but it's no use. You must go to another doctor.

MRS DUBEDAT. But can you give me the name of another doctor who understands your secret?

RIDGEON. I have no secret: I am not a quack.

MRS DUBEDAT. I beg your pardon: I didnt mean to say anything wrong. I dont understand how to speak to you. Oh pray dont be offended.

RIDGEON [*again a little ashamed*] There! there! never

mind. [*He relaxes and sits down*]. After all, I'm talking nonsense: I daresay I am a quack, a quack with a qualification. But my discovery is not patented.

MRS DUBEDAT. Then can any doctor cure my husband? Oh, why dont they do it? I have tried so many: I have spent so much. If only you would give me the name of another doctor.

RIDGEON. Every man in this street is a doctor. But outside myself and the handful of men I am training at St Anne's, there is nobody as yet who has mastered the opsonin treatment. And we are full up? I'm sorry; but that is all I can say. [*Rising*] Good morning.

MRS DUBEDAT [*suddenly and desperately taking some drawings from her portfolio*] Doctor: look at these. You understand drawings: you have good ones in your waiting-room. Look at them. They are his work.

RIDGEON. It's no use my looking. [*He looks, all the same*] Hallo! [*He takes one to the window and studies it*]. Yes: this is the real thing. Yes, yes. [*He looks at another and returns to her*]. These are very clever. Theyre unfinished, arnt they?

MRS DUBEDAT. He gets tired so soon. But you see, dont you, what a genius he is? You see that he is worth saving. Oh, doctor, I married him just to help him to begin: I had money enough to tide him over the hard years at the beginning—to enable him to follow his inspiration until his genius was recognized. And I was useful to him as a model: his drawings of me sold quite quickly.

RIDGEON. Have you got one?

MRS DUBEDAT [*producing another*] Only this one. It was the first.

RIDGEON [*devouring it with his eyes*] Thats a wonderful drawing. Why is it called Jennifer?

MRS DUBEDAT. My name is Jennifer.

RIDGEON. A strange name.

MRS DUBEDAT. Not in Cornwall. I am Cornish. It's only

what you call Guinevere.

RIDGEON [*repeating the names with a certain pleasure in them*] Guinevere. Jennifer. [*Looking again at the drawing*]. Yes: it's really a wonderful drawing. Excuse me; but may I ask is it for sale? I'll buy it.

MRS DUBEDAT. Oh, take it. It's my own: he gave it to me. Take it. Take them all. Take everything; ask anything; but save him. You can: you will: you must.

REDPENNY [*entering with every sign of alarm*] Theyve just telephoned from the hospital that youre to come instantly —a patient on the point of death. The carriage is waiting.

RIDGEON [*intolerantly*] Oh, nonsense: get out. [*Greatly annoyed*] What do you mean by interrupting me like this?

REDPENNY. But—

RIDGEON. Chut! cant you see I'm engaged? Be off.

Redpenny, bewildered, vanishes.

MRS DUBEDAT [*rising*] Doctor: one instant only before you go—

RIDGEON. Sit down. It's nothing.

MRS DUBEDAT. But the patient. He said he was dying.

RIDGEON. Oh, he's dead by this time. Never mind. Sit down.

MRS DUBEDAT [*sitting down and breaking down*] Oh, you none of you care. You see people die every day.

RIDGEON [*petting her*] Nonsense! it's nothing: I told him to come in and say that. I thought I should want to get rid of you.

MRS DUBEDAT [*shocked at the falsehood*] Oh!

RIDGEON [*continuing*] Dont look so bewildered: theres nobody dying.

MRS DUBEDAT. My husband is.

RIDGEON [*pulling himself together*] Ah, yes: I had forgotten your husband. Mrs. Dubedat: you are asking me to do a very serious thing?

MRS DUBEDAT. I am asking you to save the life of a great man.

RIDGEON. You are asking me to kill another man for his sake; for as surely as I undertake another case, I shall have to hand back one of the old ones to the ordinary treatment. Well, I dont shrink from that. I have had to do it before; and I will do it again if you can convince me that his life is more important than the worst life I am now saving. But you must convince me first.

MRS DUBEDAT. He made those drawings; and they are not the best—nothing like the best; only I did not bring the really best: so few people like them. He is twenty-three: his whole life is before him. Wont you let me bring him to you? wont you speak to him? wont you see for yourself?

RIDGEON. Is he well enough to come to a dinner at the Star and Garter at Richmond?

MRS DUBEDAT. Oh yes. Why?

RIDGEON. I'll tell you. I am inviting all my old friends to a dinner to celebrate my knighthood—youve seen about it in the papers, havnt you?

MRS DUBEDAT. Yes, oh yes. That was how I found out about you.

RIDGEON. It will be a doctors' dinner; and it was to have been a bachelors' dinner. I'm a bachelor. Now if you will entertain for me, and bring your husband, he will meet me; and he will meet some of the most eminent men in my profession: Sir Patrick Cullen, Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonington, Cutler Walpole, and others. I can put the case to them; and your husband will have to stand or fall by what we think of him. Will you come?

MRS DUBEDAT. Yes, of course I will come. Oh, thank you, thank you. And may I bring some of his drawings—the really good ones?

RIDGEON. Yes. I will let you know the date in the course of tomorrow. Leave me your address.

MRS DUBEDAT. Thank you again and again. You have made me so happy: I know you will admire him and like him. This is my address. [*She gives him her card*].

RIDGEON. Thank you. [*He rings*].

MRS DUBEDAT [*embarrassed*] May I—is there—should I—I mean—[*she blushes and stops in confusion*].

RIDGEON. Whats the matter?

MRS DUBEDAT. Your fee for this consultation?

RIDGEON. Oh, I forgot that. Shall we say a beautiful drawing of his favorite model for the whole treatment, including the cure?

MRS DUBEDAT. You are very generous. Thank you. I know you will cure him. Goodbye.

RIDGEON. I will. Goodbye. [*They shake hands*]. By the way, you know, dont you, that tuberculosis is catching. You take every precaution, I hope.

MRS DUBEDAT. I am not likely to forget it. They treat us like lepers at the hotels.

EMMY [*at the door*] Well, deary: have you got round him?

RIDGEON. Yes. Attend to the door and hold your tongue.

EMMY. Thats a good boy. [*She goes out with Mrs Dubedat*].

RIDGEON [*alone*] Consultation free. Cure guaranteed. [*He heaves a great sigh*].

ACT II

After dinner on the terrace at the Star and Garter, Richmond. Cloudless summer night; nothing disturbs the stillness except from time to time the long trajectory of a distant train and the measured clucking of oars coming up from the Thames in the valley below. The dinner is over; and three of the eight chairs are empty. Sir Patrick, with his back to the view, is at the head of the square table with Ridgeon. The two chairs opposite them are empty. On their right come, first, a vacant chair, and then one very fully occupied by B. B., who basks blissfully in the moonbeams. On their left, Schutzmacher and Walpole. The entrance to the hotel is on their right, behind B. B. The five men are silently enjoying their coffee and cigarets, full of food, and not altogether void of wine.

Mrs Dubedat, wrapped up for departure, comes in. They rise, except Sir Patrick; but she takes one of the vacant places at the foot of the table, next B. B.; and they sit down again.

MRS DUBEDAT [*as she enters*] Louis will be here presently. He is shewing Dr Blenkinsop how to work the telephone. [*She sits*]. Oh, I am so sorry we have to go. It seems such a shame, this beautiful night. And we have enjoyed ourselves so much.

RIDGEON. I dont believe another half-hour would do Mr Dubedat a bit of harm.

SIR PATRICK. Come now, Colly, come! come! none of that. You take your man home, Mrs Dubedat; and get him to bed before eleven.

B. B. Yes, yes. Bed before eleven. Quite right, quite right. Sorry to lose you, my dear lady; but Sir Patrick's orders are the laws of—er—of Tyre and Sidon.

WALPOLE. Let me take you home in my motor.

SIR PATRICK. No you ought to be ashamed of yourself,

Walpole. Your motor will take Mr and Mrs Dubedat to the station, and quite far enough too for an open carriage at night.

MRS DUBEDAT. Oh, I am sure the train is best.

RIDGEON. Well, Mrs Dubedat, we have had a most enjoyable evening.

WALPOLE. } Most enjoyable.
B. B. } Delightful. Charming. Unforgettable.

MRS DUBEDAT [*with a touch of shy anxiety*] What did you think of Louis? Or am I wrong to ask?

RIDGEON. Wrong! Why, we are all charmed with him.

WALPOLE. Delighted.

B. B. Most happy to have met him. A privilege, a real privilege.

SIR PATRICK [*grunts*]!

MRS DUBEDAT [*quickly*] Sir Patrick: are you uneasy about him?

SIR PATRICK [*discreetly*] I admire his drawings greatly, maam.

MRS DUBEDAT. Yes; but I meant—

RIDGEON. You shall go away quite happy. He's worth saving. He must and shall be saved.

Mrs Dubedat rises and gasps with delight, relief and gratitude. They all rise except Sir Patrick and Schutzmacher, and come reassuringly to her.

B. B. Certainly, cer-tainly.

WALPOLE. Theres no real difficulty, if only you know what to do.

MRS DUBEDAT. Oh, how can I ever thank you! From this night I can begin to be happy at last. You dont know what I feel.

She sits down in tears. They crowd about her to console her.

B. B. My dear lady: come come! come come [*very persuasively*] come come!

WALPOLE. Dont mind us. Have a good cry.

RIDGEON. No: dont cry. Your husband had better not know that weve been talking about him.

MRS DUBEDAT [*quickly pulling herself together*] No, of course not. Please dont mind me. What a glorious thing it must be to be a doctor! [*They laugh*]. Dont laugh. You dont know what youve done for me. I never knew until now how deadly afraid I was—how I had come to dread the worst. I never dared let myself know. But now the relief has come: now I know.

Louis Dubedat comes from the hotel, in his overcoat, his throat wrapped in a shawl. He is a slim young man of 23, physically still a stripling, and pretty, though not effeminate. He has turquoise blue eyes, and a trick of looking you straight in the face with them, which, combined with a frank smile, is very engaging. Although he is all nerves, and very observant and quick of apprehension, he is not in the least shy. He is younger than Jennifer; but he patronizes her as a matter of course. The doctors do not put him out in the least: neither Sir Patrick's years nor Bloomfield Bonington's majesty have the smallest apparent effect on him: he is as natural as a cat: he moves among men as most men move among things, though he is intentionally making himself agreeable to them on this occasion. Like all people who can be depended on to take care of themselves, he is welcome company; and his artist's power of appealing to the imagination gains him credit for all sorts of qualities and powers, whether he possesses them or not.

LOUIS [*pulling on his gloves behind Ridgeon's chair*] Now, Jinny-Gwinny: the motor has come round.

RIDGEON. Why do you let him spoil your beautiful name like that, Mrs Dubedat?

MRS DUBEDAT. Oh, on grand occasions I am Jennifer.

B. B. You are a bachelor: you do not understand these things, Ridgeon. Look at me [*They look*]. I also have two names. In moments of domestic worry, I am simple Ralph. When the sun shines in the home, I am Beedle-Deedle-

Dumkins. Such is married life! Mr Dubedat: may I ask you to do me a favor before you go. Will you sign your name to this menu card, under the sketch you have made of me?

WALPOLE. Yes; and mine too, if you will be so good.

LOUIS. Certainly. [*He sits down and signs the cards*].

MRS DUBEDAT. Wont you sign Dr Schutzmacher's for him, Louis?

LOUIS. I dont think Dr Schutzmacher is pleased with his portrait. I'll tear it up. [*He reaches across the table for Schutzmacher's menu card, and is about to tear it. Schutzmacher makes no sign*].

RIDGEON. No, no: if Loony doesnt want it, I do.

LOUIS. I'll sign it for you with pleasure. [*He signs and hands it to Ridgeon*]. Ive just been making a little note of the river tonight: it will work up into something good [*he shews a pocket sketch-book*]. I think I'll call it the Silver Danube.

B. B. Ah, charming, charming.

WALPOLE. Very sweet. Youre a nailer at pastel.

Louis coughs, first out of modesty, then from tuberculosis.

SIR PATRICK. Now then, Mr Dubedat: youve had enough of the night air. Take him home, maam.

MRS DUBEDAT. Yes. Come, Louis.

RIDGEON. Never fear. Never mind. I'll make that cough all right.

B. B. We will stimulate the phagocytes. [*With tender effusion, shaking her hand*] Goodnight, Mrs Dubedat. Goodnight. Goodnight.

WALPOLE. If the phagocytes fail, come to me. I'll put you right.

LOUIS. Goodnight, Sir Patrick. Happy to have met you.

SIR PATRICK. 'Night [*half a grunt*].

MRS DUBEDAT. Goodnight, Sir Patrick.

SIR PATRICK. Cover yourself well up. Dont think your lungs are made of iron because theyre better than his. Goodnight.

MRS DUBEDAT. Thank you. Thank you. Nothing hurts me. Goodnight.

Louis goes out through the hôtel without noticing Schutzmacher. Mrs Dubedat hesitates, then bows to him. Schutzmacher rises and bows formally, German fashion. She goes out, attended by Ridgeon. The rest resume their seats, ruminating or smoking quietly.

B. B. [*harmoniously*] Dee-lightful couple! Charming woman! Gifted lad! Remarkable talent! Graceful outlines! Perfect evening! Great success! Interesting case! Glorious night! Exquisite scenery! Capital dinner! Stimulating conversation! Restful outing! Good wine! Happy ending! Touching gratitude! Lucky Ridgeon—

RIDGEON [*returning*] What's that? Calling me, B. B.? [*He goes back to his seat next Sir Patrick*].

B. B. No, no. Only congratulating you on a most successful evening! Enchanting woman! Thorough breeding! Gentle nature! Refined—

Blenkinsop comes from the hotel and takes the empty chair next Ridgeon.

BLENKINSOP. I'm so sorry to have left you like this, Ridgeon; but it was a telephone message from the police. Theyve found half a milkman at our level crossing with a prescription of mine in its pocket. Wheres Mr Dubedat?

RIDGEON. Gone.

BLENKINSOP. [*rising, very pale*] Gone!

RIDGEON. Just this moment—

BLENKINSOP. Perhaps I could overtake him—[*he rushes into the hotel*].

WALPOLE [*calling after him*] He's in the motor, man, miles off. You cant—[*giving it up*]. No use.

RIDGEON. Theyre really very nice people. I confess I was afraid the husband would turn out an appalling bounder. But he's almost as charming in his way as she is in hers. And theres no mistake about his being a genius. It's something to have got a case really worth saving. Somebody else

will have to go; but at all events it will be easy to find a worse man.

SIR PATRICK. How do you know?

RIDGEON. Come now, Sir Paddy, no growling. Have something more to drink.

SIR PATRICK. No, thank you.

WALPOLE. Do you see anything wrong with Dubedat, B. B.?

B. B. Oh, a charming young fellow. Besides, after all, what could be wrong with him? Look at him. What could be wrong with him?

SIR PATRICK. There are two things that can be wrong with any man. One of them is a cheque. The other is a woman. Until you know that a man's sound on these two points, you know nothing about him.

B. B. Ah, cynic, cynic!

WALPOLE. He's all right as to the cheque, for a while at all events. He talked to me quite frankly before dinner as to the pressure of money difficulties on an artist. He says he has no vices and is very economical, but that theres one extravagance he cant afford and yet cant resist; and that is dressing his wife prettily. So I said, bang plump out, "Let me lend you twenty pounds, and pay me when your ship comes home." He was really very nice about it. He took it like a man; and it was a pleasure to see how happy it made him, poor chap.

B. B. [*who has listened to Walpole with growing perturbation*] But—but—but—when was this, may I ask?

WALPOLE. When I joined you that time down by the river.

B. B. But, my dear Walpole, he had just borrowed ten pounds from me.

WALPOLE. What!

SIR PATRICK [*grunts*]!

B. B. [*indulgently*] Well, well, it was really hardly borrowing; for he said heaven only knew when he could pay me.

I couldnt refuse. It appears that Mrs Dubedat has taken a sort of fancy to me—

WALPOLE. [*quickly*] No: it was to me.

B. B. Certainly not. Your name was never mentioned between us. He is so wrapped up in his work that he has to leave her a good deal alone; and the poor innocent young fellow—he has of course no idea of my position or how busy I am—actually wanted me to call occasionally and talk to her.

WALPOLE. Exactly what he said to me!

B. B. Pooh! Pooh pooh! Really, I must say. [*Much disturbed, he rises and goes up to the balustrade, contemplating the landscape vexedly*].

WALPOLE. Look here, Ridgeon! this is beginning to look serious.

Blenkinsop, very anxious and wretched, but trying to look unconcerned, comes back.

RIDGEON. Well, did you catch him?

BLENKINSOP. No. Excuse my running away like that. [*He sits down at the foot of the table, next Bloomfield Bonington's chair*].

WALPOLE. Anything the matter?

BLENKINSOP. Oh no. A trifle—something ridiculous. It cant be helped. Never mind.

RIDGEON. Was it anything about Dubedat?

BLENKINSOP [*almost breaking down*] I ought to keep it to myself, I know. I cant tell you, Ridgeon, how ashamed I am of dragging my miserable poverty to your dinner after all your kindness. It's not that you wont ask me again; but it's so humiliating. And I did so look forward to one evening in my dress clothes (theyre still presentable, you see) with all my troubles left behind, just like old times.

RIDGEON. But what has happened?

BLENKINSOP. Oh, nothing. It's too ridiculous. I had just scraped up four shillings for this little outing; and it cost

me one-and-fourpence to get here. Well, Dubedat asked me to lend him half-a-crown to tip the chambermaid of the room his wife left her wraps in, and for the cloakroom. He said he only wanted it for five minutes, as she had his purse. So of course I lent it to him. And he's forgotten to pay me. I've just two pence to get back with.

RIDGEON. Oh, never mind that—

BLENKINSOP [*stopping him resolutely*] No: I know what youre going to say; but I won't take it. Ive never borrowed a penny; and I never will. Ive nothing left but my friends; and I wont sell them. If none of you were to be able to meet me without being afraid that my civility was leading up to the loan of five shillings, there would be an end of everything for me. I'll take your old clothes, Colly, sooner than disgrace you by talking to you in the street in my own; but I wont borrow money. I'll train it as far as the twopence will take me; and I'll tramp the rest.

WALPOLE. Youll do the whole distance in my motor. [*They are all greatly relieved; and Walpole hastens to get away from the painful subject by adding*] Did he get anything out of you, Mr Schutzmacher?

SCHUTZMACHER [*shakes his head in a most expressive negative*].

WALPOLE. You didnt appreciate his drawing, I think.

SCHUTZMACHER. Oh yes I did. I should have liked very much to have kept the sketch and got it autographed.

B. B. But why didnt you?

SCHUTZMACHER. Well, the fact is, when I joined Dubedat after his conversation with Mr Walpole, he said that the Jews were the only people who knew anything about art, and that though he had to put up with your Philistine twaddle, as he called it, it was what I said about the drawings that really pleased him. He also said that his wife was greatly struck with my knowledge, and that she always admired Jews. Then he asked me to advance him £50 on

the security of the drawings.

B. B.	[*All exclaiming together*]	No, no. Positively! Seriously!
WALPOLE		What! Another fifty!
BLENKINSOP		Think of that!
SIR PATRICK		[*grunts*]!

SCHUTZMACHER. Of course I couldn't lend money to a stranger like that.

B. B. I envy you the power to say No, Mr Schutzmacher. Of course, I knew I oughtnt to lend money to a young fellow in that way; but I simply hadnt the nerve to refuse. I couldnt very well, you know, could I?

SCHUTZMACHER. I dont understand that. *I* felt that I couldnt very well lend it.

WALPOLE. What did he say?

SCHUTZMACHER. Well, he made a very uncalled-for remark about a Jew not understanding the feelings of a gentleman. I must say you Gentiles are very hard to please. You say we are no gentlemen when we lend money; and when we refuse to lend it you say just the same. I didnt mean to behave badly. As I told him, I might have lent it to him if he had been a Jew himself.

SIR PATRICK [*with a grunt*] And what did he say to that?

SCHUTZMACHER. Oh, he began trying to persuade me that he was one of the chosen people—that his artistic faculty shewed it, and that his name was as foreign as my own. He said he didnt really want £50; that he was only joking; that all he wanted was a couple of sovereigns.

B. B. No, no, Mr Schutzmacher. You invented that last touch. Seriously, now?

SCHUTZMACHER. No. You cant improve on Nature in telling stories about gentlemen like Mr Dubedat.

BLENKINSOP. You certainly do stand by one another, you chosen people, Mr Schutzmacher.

SCHUTZMACHER. Not at all. Personally, I like Englishmen

better than Jews, and always associate with them. Thats only natural, because, as I am a Jew, theres nothing interesting in a Jew to me, whereas there is always something interesting and foreign in an Englishman. But in money matters it's quite different. You see, when an Englishman borrows, all he knows or cares is that he wants money; and he'll sign anything to get it, without in the least understanding it, or intending to carry out the agreement if it turns out badly for him. In fact, he thinks you a cad if you ask him to carry it out under such circumstances. Just like the Merchant of Venice, you know. But if a Jew makes an agreement, he means to keep it and expects you to keep it. If he wants money for a time, he borrows it and knows he must pay it at the end of the time. If he knows he cant pay, he begs it as a gift.

RIDGEON. Come, Loony! do you mean to say that Jews are never rogues and thieves?

SCHUTZMACHER. Oh, not at all. But I was not talking of criminals. I was comparing honest Englishmen with honest Jews.

One of the hotel maids, a pretty, fair-haired woman of about 25, comes from the hotel, rather furtively. She accosts Ridgeon.

THE MAID. I beg your pardon, sir—

RIDGEON. Eh?

THE MAID. I beg pardon, sir. It's not about the hotel. I'm not allowed to be on the terrace; and I should be discharged if I were seen speaking to you, unless you were kind enough to say you called me to ask whether the motor has come back from the station yet.

WALPOLE. Has it?

THE MAID. Yes, sir.

RIDGEON. Well, what do you want?

THE MAID. Would you mind, sir, giving me the address of the gentleman that was with you at dinner?

RIDGEON [*sharply*] Yes, of course I should mind very much. You have no right to ask.

THE MAID. Yes, sir, I know it looks like that. But what am I to do?

SIR PATRICK. Whats the matter with you?

THE MAID. Nothing, sir. I want the address: thats all.

B. B. You mean the young gentleman?

THE MAID. Yes, sir: that went to catch the train with a woman he brought with him.

RIDGEON. The woman! Do you mean the lady who dined here? the gentleman's wife?

THE MAID. Dont believe them, sir. She cant be his wife. I'm his wife.

B. B.	[*in amazed remonstrance*] My good girl!
RIDGEON	You his wife!
WALPOLE	What! whats that? Oh, this is getting perfectly fascinating, Ridgeon.

THE MAID. I could run upstairs and get you my marriage lines in a minute, sir, if you doubt my word. He's Mr Louis Dubedat, isnt he?

RIDGEON. Yes.

THE MAID. Well, sir, you may believe me or not; but I'm the lawful Mrs Dubedat.

SIR PATRICK. And why arnt you living with your husband?

THE MAID. We couldnt afford it, sir. I had thirty pounds saved; and we spent it all on our honeymoon in three weeks, and a lot more that he borrowed. Then I had to go back into service, and he went to London to get work at his drawing; and he never wrote me a line or sent me an address. I never saw nor heard of him again until I caught sight of him from the window going off in the motor with that woman.

SIR PATRICK. Well, thats two wives to start with.

B. B. Now upon my soul I dont want to be uncharitable;

but really I'm beginning to suspect that our young friend is rather careless.

SIR PATRICK. Beginning to think! How long will it take you, man, to find out that he's a damned young blackguard?

BLENKINSOP. Oh, thats severe, Sir Patrick, very severe. Of course it's bigamy; but still he's very young; and she's very pretty Mr Walpole: may I spunge on you for another of those nice cigarets of yours? [*He changes his seat for the one next Walpole*].

WALPOLE. Certainly. [*He feels in his pockets*]. Oh bother! Where—? [*Suddenly remembering*] I say: I recollect now: I passed my cigaret case to Dubedat and he didnt return it. It was a gold one.

THE MAID. He didnt mean any harm: he never thinks about things like that, sir. I'll get it back for you, sir, if youll tell me where to find him.

RIDGEON. What am I to do? Shall I give her the address or not?

SIR PATRICK. Give her your own address; and then we'll see. [*To the maid*] Youll have to be content with that for the present, my girl. [*Ridgeon gives her his card*]. Whats your name?

THE MAID. Minnie Tinwell, sir.

SIR PATRICK. Well, you write him a letter to care of this gentleman; and it will be sent on. Now be off with you.

THE MAID. Thank you, sir, I'm sure you wouldnt see me wronged. Thank you all, gentlemen; and excuse the liberty.

She goes into the hotel. They watch her in silence.

RIDGEON [*when she is gone*] Do you realize, you chaps, that we have promised Mrs Dubedat to save this fellow's life?

BLENKINSOP. Whats the matter with him?

RIDGEON. Tuberculosis.

BLENKINSOP [*interested*] And can you cure that?

RIDGEON. I believe so.

BLENKINSOP. Then I wish youd cure me. My right lung

is touched, I'm sorry to say.

RIDGEON } [*all together*] { What! your lung is going!
B. B. } [*all together*] { My dear Blenkinsop, what do you tell me? [*full of concern for Blenkinsop, he comes back from the balustrade*].
SIR PATRICK } [*all together*] { Eh? Eh? whats that?
WALPOLE } [*all together*] { Hullo! you mustnt neglect this, you know.

BLENKINSOP [*putting his fingers in his ears*] No, no: it's no use. I know what youre going to say: Ive said it often to others. I cant afford to take care of myself; and theres an end of it. If a fortnight's holiday would save my life, I'd have to die. I shall get on as others have to get on. We cant all go to St Moritz or to Egypt, you know, Sir Ralph. Dont talk about it.

Embarrassed silence.

SIR PATRICK [*grunts and looks hard at Ridgeon*]!

SCHUTZMACHER [*looking at his watch and rising*] I must go. It's been a very pleasant evening, Colly. You might let me have my portrait if you dont mind. I'll send Mr Dubedat that couple of sovereigns for it.

RIDGEON [*giving him the menu card*] Oh dont do that, Loony. I dont think he'd like that.

SCHUTZMACHER. Well, of course I shant if you feel that way about it. But I don't think you understand Dubedat. However, perhaps thats because I'm a Jew. Goodnight, Dr Blenkinsop [*shaking hands*].

BLENKINSOP. Goodnight, sir—I mean—Goodnight.

SCHUTZMACHER [*waving his hand to the rest*] Goodnight, everybody.

WALPOLE }
B.B. }
SIR PATRICK } Goodnight.
RIDGEON }

B.B. repeats the salutation several times, in varied musical tones. Schutzmacher goes out.

SIR PATRICK. It's time for us all to move. [*He rises and comes between Blenkinsop and Walpole. Ridgeon also rises*]. Mr Walpole: take Blenkinsop home: he's had enough of the open air cure for tonight. Have you a thick overcoat to wear in the motor, Dr Blenkinsop?

BLENKINSOP. Oh, theyll give me some brown paper in the hotel; and a few thicknesses of brown paper across the chest are better than any fur coat.

WALPOLE. Well, come along. Goodnight, Colly. Youre coming with us, arnt you, B. B.?

B. B. Yes: I'm coming. [*Walpole and Blenkinsop go into the hotel*]. Goodnight, my dear Ridgeon [*shaking hands affectionately*]. Dont let us lose sight of your interesting patient and his very charming wife. We must not judge him too hastily, you know. [*With unction*] Goooooooodnight, Paddy. Bless you, dear old chap. [*Sir Patrick utters a formidable grunt. B. B. laughs and pats him indulgently on the shoulder*] Goodnight. Goodnight. Goodnight. Goodnight. [*He goodnights himself into the hotel*].

The others have meanwhile gone without ceremony. Ridgeon and Sir Patrick are left alone together. Ridgeon, deep in thought, comes down to Sir Patrick.

SIR PATRICK. Well, Mr Savior of Lives: which is it to be? that honest decent man Blenkinsop, or that rotten blackguard of an artist, eh?

RIDGEON. It's not an easy case to judge, is it? Blenkinsop's an honest decent man; but is he any use? Dubedat's a rotten blackguard; but he's a genuine source of pretty and pleasant and good things.

SIR PATRICK. What will he be a source of for that poor innocent wife of his, when she finds him out?

RIDGEON. Thats true. Her life will be a hell.

SIR PATRICK. And tell me this. Suppose you had this choice put before you: either to go through life and find all

the pictures bad but all the men and women good, or to go through life and find all the pictures good and all the men and women rotten. Which would you choose?

RIDGEON. Thats a devilishly difficult question, Paddy. The pictures are so agreeable, and the good people so infernally disagreeable and mischievous, that I really cant undertake to say offhand which I should prefer to do without.

SIR PATRICK. Come come! none of your cleverness with me: I'm too old for it. Blenkinsop isnt that sort of good man; and you know it.

RIDGEON. It would be simpler if Blenkinsop could paint Dubedat's pictures.

SIR PATRICK. It would be simpler still if Dubedat had some of Blenkinsop's honesty. The world isnt going to be made simple for you, my lad: you must take it as it is. Youve to hold the scales between Blenkinsop and Dubedat. Hold them fairly.

RIDGEON. Well, I'll be as fair as I can. I'll put into one scale all the pounds Dubedat has borrowed, and into the other all the half-crowns that Blenkinsop hasnt borrowed.

SIR PATRICK. And youll take out of Dubedat's scale all the faith he has destroyed and the honor he has lost, and youll put into Blenkinsop's scale all the faith he has justified and the honor he has created.

RIDGEON. Come come, Paddy! none of your claptrap with me: I'm too sceptical for it. I'm not at all convinced that the world wouldnt be a better world if everybody behaved as Dubedat does than it is now that everybody behaves as Blenkinsop does.

SIR PATRICK. Then why dont you behave as Dubedat does?

RIDGEON. Ah, that beats me. Thats the experimental test. Still, it's a dilemma. It's a dilemma. You see theres a complication we havnt mentioned.

SIR PATRICK. Whats that?

RIDGEON. Well, if I let Blenkinsop die, at least nobody can say I did it because I wanted to marry his widow.

SIR PATRICK. Eh! Whats that?

RIDGEON. Now if I let Dubedat die, I'll marry his widow.

SIR PATRICK. Perhaps she wont have you, you know.

RIDGEON [*with a self-assured shake of the head*] I've a pretty good flair for that sort of thing. I know when a woman is interested in me. She is.

SIR PATRICK. Well, sometimes a man knows best; and sometimes he knows worst. Youd much better cure them both.

RIDGEON. I cant. I'm at my limit. I can squeeze in one more case, but not two. I must choose.

SIR PATRICK. Well, you must choose as if she didnt exist: thats clear.

RIDGEON. Is that clear to you? Mind: it's not clear to me. She troubles my judgment.

SIR PATRICK. To me, it's a plain choice between a man and a lot of pictures.

RIDGEON. It's easier to replace a dead man than a good picture.

SIR PATRICK. Colly: when you live in an age that runs to pictures and statues and plays and brass bands because its men and women are not good enough to comfort its poor aching soul, you should thank Providence that you belong to a profession which is a high and great profession because its business is to heal and mend men and women.

RIDGEON. In short, as a member of a high and great profession, I'm to kill my patient.

SIR PATRICK. Dont talk wicked nonsense. You cant kill him. But you can leave him in other hands.

RIDGEON. In B. B.'s for instance: eh? [*looking at him significantly*].

SIR PATRICK [*demurely facing his look*] Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonington is a very eminent physician.

RIDGEON. He is.

SIR PATRICK. I'm going for my hat.

Ridgeon strikes the bell as Sir Patrick makes for the

hotel. A waiter comes.

RIDGEON [*to the waiter*] My bill, please.

WAITER. Yes, sir.

He goes for it.

ACT III

In Dubedat's studio. Viewed from the large window the outer door is in the wall on the left at the near end. The door leading to the inner rooms is in the opposite wall, at the far end. The facing wall has neither window nor door. The plaster on all the walls is uncovered and undecorated, except by scrawlings of charcoal sketches and memoranda. There is a studio throne (a chair on a dais) a little to the left, opposite the inner door, and an easel to the right, opposite the outer door, with a dilapidated chair at it. Near the easel and against the wall is a bare wooden table with bottles and jars of oil and medium, paint-smudged rags, tubes of color, brushes, charcoal, a small lay figure, a kettle and spirit-lamp, and other odds and ends. By the table is a sofa, littered with drawing blocks, sketch-books, loose sheets of paper, newspapers, books, and more smudged rags. Next the outer door is an umbrella and hat stand, occupied partly by Louis' hats and cloak and muffler, and partly by odds and ends of costumes. There is an old piano stool on the near side of this door. In the corner near the inner door is a little tea-table. A lay figure, in a cardinal's robe and hat, with an hour-glass in one hand and a scythe slung on its back, smiles with inane malice at Louis, who, in a milkman's smock much smudged with colors, is painting a piece of brocade which he has draped about his wife. She is sitting on the throne, not interested in the painting, and appealing to him very anxiously about another matter.

MRS DUBEDAT. Promise.

LOUIS [*putting on a touch of paint with notable skill and care and answering quite perfunctorily*] I promise, my darling.

MRS DUBEDAT. When you want money, you will always come to me.

LOUIS. But it's so sordid, dearest. I hate money. I cant keep always bothering you for money, money, money. Thats what drives me sometimes to ask other people, though I hate doing it.

MRS DUBEDAT. It is far better to ask me, dear. It gives people a wrong idea of you.

LOUIS. But I want to spare your little fortune, and raise money on my own work. Dont be unhappy, love: I can easily earn enough to pay it all back. I shall have a one-man-show next season; and then there will be no more money troubles. [*Putting down his palette*] There! I mustnt do any more on that until it's bone-dry; so you may come down.

MRS DUBEDAT [*throwing off the drapery as she steps down, and revealing a plain frock of tussore silk*] But you have promised, remember, seriously and faithfully, never to borrow again until you have first asked me.

LOUIS. Seriously and faithfully. [*Embracing her*] Ah, my love, how right you are! how much it means to me to have you by me to guard me against living too much in the skies. On my solemn oath, from this moment forth I will never borrow another penny.

MRS DUBEDAT [*delighted*] Ah, thats right. Does his wicked worrying wife torment him and drag him down from the clouds. [*She kisses him*]. And now, dear, wont you finish those drawings for Maclean?

LOUIS. Oh, they dont matter. Ive got nearly all the money from him in advance.

MRS DUBEDAT. But, dearest, that is just the reason why you should finish them. He asked me the other day whether you really intended to finish them.

LOUIS. Confound his impudence! What the devil does he take me for? Now that just destroys all my interest in the beastly job. Ive a good mind to throw up the commission, and pay him back his money.

MRS DUBEDAT. We cant afford that, dear. You had better finish the drawings and have done with them. I think it is a

mistake to accept money in advance.

LOUIS. But how are we to live?

MRS DUBEDAT. Well, Louis, it is getting hard enough as it is, now that they are all refusing to pay except on delivery.

LOUIS. Damn those fellows! they think of nothing and care for nothing but their wretched money.

MRS DUBEDAT. Still, if they pay us, they ought to have what they pay for.

LOUIS [*coaxing*] There now: thats enough lecturing for today. Ive promised to be good, havnt I?

MRS DUBEDAT [*putting her arms round his neck*] You know that I hate lecturing, and that I dont for a moment misunderstand you, dear, dont you?

LOUIS [*fondly*] I know. I know. I'm a wretch; and youre an angel. Oh, if only I were strong enough to work steadily, I'd make my darling's house a temple, and her shrine a chapel more beautiful than was ever imagined. I cant pass the shops without wrestling with the temptation to go in and order all the really good things they have for you.

MRS DUBEDAT. I want nothing but you, dear. [*She gives him a caress, to which he responds so passionately that she disengages herself*]. There! be good now: remember that the doctors are coming this morning. Isnt it extraordinarily kind of them, Louis, to insist on coming? all of them, to consult about you?

LOUIS [*coolly*] Oh, I daresay they think it will be a feather in their cap to cure a rising artist. They wouldnt come if it didnt amuse them, anyhow. [*Someone knocks at the door*]. I say: it's not time yet, is it?

MRS DUBEDAT. No, not quite yet.

LOUIS [*opening the door and finding Ridgeon there*] Hello, Ridgeon. Delighted to see you. Come in.

MRS DUBEDAT [*shaking hands*] It's so good of you to come, doctor.

LOUIS. Excuse this place, wont you? It's only a studio,

you know: theres no real convenience for living here. But we pig along somehow, thanks to Jennifer.

MRS DUBEDAT. Now I'll run away. Perhaps later on, when youre finished with Louis, I may come in and hear the verdict. [*Ridgeon bows rather constrainedly*]. Would you rather I didn't?

RIDGEON. Not at all. Not at all.

Mrs Dubedat looks at him, a little puzzled by his formal manner; then goes into the inner room.

LOUIS [*flippantly*] I say: dont look so grave. Theres nothing awful going to happen, is there?

RIDGEON. No.

LOUIS. Thats all right. Poor Jennifer has been looking forward to your visit more than you can imagine. Shes taken quite a fancy to you, Ridgeon. The poor girl has nobody to talk to: I'm always painting. [*Taking up a sketch*] Theres a little sketch I made of her yesterday.

RIDGEON. She shewed it to me a fortnight ago when she first called on me.

LOUIS [*quite unabashed*] Oh! did she? Good Lord! how time does fly! I could have sworn I'd only just finished it. It's hard for her here, seeing me piling up drawings and nothing coming in for them. Of course I shall sell them next year fast enough, after my one-man-show; but while the grass grows the steed starves. I hate to have her coming to me for money, and having none to give her. But what can I do?

RIDGEON. I understood that Mrs Dubedat had some property of her own.

LOUIS. Oh yes, a little; but how could a man with any decency of feeling touch that? Suppose I did, what would she have to live on if I died? I'm not insured: cant afford the premiums. [*Picking out another drawing*] How do you like that?

RIDGEON [*putting it aside*] I have not come here today to

look at your drawings. I have more serious and pressing business with you.

LOUIS. You want to sound my wretched lung. [*With impulsive candor*] My dear Ridgeon: I'll be frank with you. What's the matter in this house isnt lungs but bills. It doesnt matter about me; but Jennifer has actually to economize in the matter of food. Youve made us feel that we can treat you as a friend. Will you lend us a hundred and fifty pounds?

RIDGEON. No.

LOUIS [*surprised*] Why not?

RIDGEON. I am not a rich man; and I want every penny I can spare and more for my researches.

LOUIS. You mean youd want the money back again.

RIDGEON. I presume people sometimes have that in view when they lend money.

LOUIS [*after a moment's reflection*] Well, I can manage that for you. I'll give you a cheque—or see here: theres no reason why you shouldnt have your bit too: I'll give you a cheque for two hundred.

RIDGEON. Why not cash the cheque at once without troubling me?

LOUIS. Bless you! they wouldnt cash it: I'm overdrawn as it is. No: the way to work it is this. I'll postdate the cheque next October. In October Jennifer's dividends come in. Well, you present the cheque. It will be returned marked "refer to drawer" or some rubbish of that sort. Then you can take it to Jennifer, and hint that if the cheque isnt taken up at once I shall be put in prison. She'll pay you like a shot. Youll clear £50; and youll do me a real service; for I do want the money very badly, old chap, I assure you.

RIDGEON [*staring at him*] You see no objection to the transaction; and you anticipate none from me!

LOUIS. Well, what objection can there be? It's quite safe. I can convince you about the dividends.

RIDGEON. I mean on the score of its being—shall I say dishonorable?

LOUIS. Well, of course I shouldnt suggest it if I didnt want the money.

RIDGEON. Indeed! Well, you will have to find some other means of getting it.

LOUIS. Do you mean that you refuse?

RIDGEON. Do I mean—! [*letting his indignation loose*] Of course I refuse, man. What do you take me for? How dare you make such a proposal to me?

LOUIS. Why not?

RIDGEON. Faugh! You would not understand me if I tried to explain. Now, once for all, I will not lend you a farthing. I should be glad to help your wife; but lending you money is no service to her.

LOUIS. Oh well, if youre in earnest about helping her, I'll tell you what you might do. You might get your patients to buy some of my things, or to give me a few portrait commissions.

RIDGEON. My patients call me in as a physician, not as a commercial traveller.

A knock at the door. Louis goes unconcernedly to open it, pursuing the subject as he goes.

LOUIS. But you must have great influence with them. You must know such lots of things about them—private things that they wouldnt like to have known. They wouldnt dare to refuse you.

RIDGEON [*exploding*] Well, upon my—

Louis opens the door, and admits Sir Patrick, Sir Ralph, and Walpole.

RIDGEON [*proceeding furiously*] Walpole: Ive been here hardly ten minutes; and already he's tried to borrow £150 from me. Then he proposed that I should get the money for him by blackmailing his wife; and youve just interrupted him in the act of suggesting that I should blackmail my patients into sitting to him for their portraits.

LOUIS. Well Ridgeon, if that is what you call being an honorable man! I spoke to you in confidence.

SIR PATRICK. We're all going to speak to you in confidence, young man.

WALPOLE [*hanging his hat on the only peg left vacant on the hat-stand*] We shall make ourselves at home for half an hour, Dubedat. Dont be alarmed: youre a most fascinating chap; and we love you.

LOUIS. Oh, all right, all right. Sit down—anywhere you can. Take this chair, Sir Patrick [*indicating the one on the throne*]. Up-z-z-z! [*helping him up: Sir Patrick grunts and enthrones himself*]. Here you are, B. B. [*Sir Ralph glares at the familiarity; but Louis, quite undisturbed, puts a big book and a sofa cushion on the dais, on Sir Patrick's right; and* B. B. *sits down, under protest*]. Let me take your hat. [*He takes B. B.'s hat unceremoniously, and substitutes it for the cardinal's hat on the head of the lay figure, thereby ingeniously destroying the dignity of the conclave. He then draws the piano stool from the wall and offers it to Walpole*]. You dont mind this. Walpole, do you? [*Walpole accepts the stool, and puts his hand into his pocket for his cigaret case. Missing it, he is reminded of his loss*].

WALPOLE. By the way, I'll trouble you for my cigaret case, if you dont mind?

LOUIS. What cigaret case?

WALPOLE. The gold one I lent you at the Star and Garter.

LOUIS [*surprised*] Was that yours?

WALPOLE. Yes.

LOUIS. I'm awfully sorry, old chap. I wondered whose it was. I'm sorry to say this is all thats left of it. [*He hitches up his smock; produces a card from his waistcoat pocket; and hands it to Walpole*].

WALPOLE. A pawn ticket!

LOUIS [*reassuringly*] It's quite safe: he cant sell it for a year, you know. I say, my dear Walpole, I am sorry. [*He places his hand ingenuously on Walpole's shoulder and looks frankly at him*].

WALPOLE [*sinking on the stool with a gasp*] Dont mention

it. It adds to your fascination.

RIDGEON [*who has been standing near the easel*] Before we go any further, you have a debt to pay, Mr. Dubedat.

LOUIS. I have a precious lot of debts to pay, Ridgeon. I'll fetch you a chair. [*He makes for the inner door*].

RIDGEON [*stopping him*] You shall not leave the room until you pay it. It's a small one; and pay it you must and shall. I dont so much mind your borrowing £10 from one of my guests and £20 from the other—

WALPOLE. I walked into it, you know. I offered it.

RIDGEON.—they could afford it. But to clean poor Blenkinsop out of his last half-crown was damnable. I intended to give him that half-crown and to be in a position to pledge him my word that you paid it. I'll have that out of you, at all events.

B. B. Quite right, Ridgeon. Quite right. Come, young man! Down with the dust. Pay up.

LOUIS. Oh, you neednt make such a fuss about it. Of course I'll pay it. I had no idea the poor fellow was hard up. I'm as shocked as any of you about it. [*Putting his hand into his pocket*] Here you are. [*Finding his pocket empty*] Oh, I say, I havnt any money on me just at present. Walpole: would you mind lending me half-a-crown just to settle this.

WALPOLE. Lend you half—[*his voice faints away*].

LOUIS. Well, if you dont, Blenkinsop wont get it; for I havnt a rap: you may search my pockets if you like.

WALPOLE. Thats conclusive. [*He produces half-a-crown*].

LOUIS [*passing it to Ridgeon*] There! I'm really glad thats settled: it was the only thing that was on my conscience. Now I hope youre all satisfied.

SIR PATRICK. Not quite, Mr Dubedat. Do you happen to know a young woman named Minnie Tinwell?

LOUIS. Minnie! I should think I do; and Minnie knows me too. She's a really nice good girl, considering her station. Whats become of her?

WALPOLE. It's no use bluffing, Dubedat. Weve seen

Minnie's marriage-lines.

LOUIS [*coolly*] Indeed? Have you seen Jennifer's?

RIDGEON [*rising in irrepressible rage*] Do you dare insinuate that Mrs Dubedat is living with you without being married to you?

LOUIS. Why not?

B. B.	[*echoing him in various tones of scandalized amazement*]	Why not!
SIR PATRICK		Why not!
RIDGEON		Why not!
WALPOLE		Why not!

LOUIS. Yes, why not? Lots of people do it: just as good people as you. Why dont you learn to think, instead of bleating and baahing like a lot of sheep when you come up against anything youre not accustomed to? [*Contemplating their amazed faces with a chuckle*] I say: I should like to draw the lot of you now: you do look jolly foolish. Especially you, Ridgeon. I had you that time, you know.

RIDGEON. How, pray?

LOUIS. Well, you set up to appreciate Jennifer, you know. And you despise me, dont you?

RIDGEON [*curtly*] I loathe you. [*He sits down again on the sofa*].

LOUIS. Just so. And yet you believe that Jennifer is a bad lot because you think I told you so.

RIDGEON. Were you lying?

LOUIS. No; but you were smelling out a scandal instead of keeping your mind clean and wholesome. I can just play with people like you. I only asked you had you seen Jennifer's marriage lines; and you concluded straight away that she hadnt got any. You dont know a lady when you see one.

B. B. [*majestically*] What do you mean by that, may I ask?

LOUIS. Now, I'm only an immoral artist; but if youd told me that Jennifer wasnt married, I'd have had the gentlemanly feeling and artistic instinct to say that she carried her marriage certificate in her face and in her character. But you are all moral men; and Jennifer is only an arti

wife—probably a model; and morality consists in suspecting other people of not being legally married. Arnt you ashamed of yourselves? Can one of you look me in the face after it?

WALPOLE. It's very hard to look you in the face, Dubedat; you have such a dazzling cheek. What about Minnie Tinwell, eh?

LOUIS. Minnie Tinwell is a young woman who has had three weeks of glorious happiness in her poor little life, which is more than most girls in her position get, I can tell you. Ask her whether she'd take it back if she could. She's got her name into history, that girl. My little sketches of her will be fought for by collectors at Christie's. She'll have a page in my biography. Pretty good, that, for a still-room maid at a seaside hotel, I think. What have you fellows done for her to compare with that?

RIDGEON. We havnt trapped her into a mock marriage and deserted her.

LOUIS. No: you wouldnt have the pluck. But dont fuss yourselves. *I* didnt desert little Minnie. We spent all our money—

WALPOLE. All her money. Thirty pounds.

LOUIS. I said all our money: hers and mine too. Her thirty pounds didn't last three days. I had to borrow four times as much to spend on her. But I didnt grudge it; and she didnt grudge her few pounds either, the brave little lassie. When we were cleaned out, we'd had enough of it: you can hardly suppose that we were fit company for longer than that; I an artist, and she quite out of art and literature and refined living and everything else. There was no desertion, no misunderstanding, no police court or divorce court sensation for you moral chaps to lick your lips over at breakfast. We just said, Well, the money's gone: weve had a good time that can never be taken from us; so kiss; part good friends; and she back to service, and I back to my studio and my Jennifer, both the better and happier for our holiday.

WALPOLE. Quite a little poem, by George!

B. B. If you had been scientifically trained, Mr Dubedat, you would know how very seldom an actual case bears out a principle. In medical practice a man may die when, scientifically speaking, he ought to have lived. I have actually known a man die of a disease from which he was, scientifically speaking, immune. But that does not affect the fundamental truth of science. In just the same way, in moral cases, a man's behavior may be quite harmless and even beneficial, when he is morally behaving like a scoundrel. And he may do great harm when he is morally acting on the highest principles. But that does not affect the fundamental truth of morality.

SIR PATRICK. And it doesnt affect the criminal law on the subject of bigamy.

LOUIS. Oh bigamy! bigamy! bigamy! What a fascination anything connected with the police has for you all, you moralists! Ive proved to you that you were utterly wrong on the moral point: now I'm going to shew you that youre utterly wrong on the legal point; and I hope it will be a lesson to you not to be so jolly cocksure next time.

WALPOLE. Rot! you were married already when you married her; and that settles it.

LOUIS. Does it! Why cant you think? How do you know she wasnt married already too?

B. B.	[*all*	Walpole! Ridgeon!
RIDGEON	*crying*	This is beyond everything.
WALPOLE	*out*	Well, damn me!
SIR PATRICK	*together*]	You young rascal.

LOUIS [*ignoring their outcry*] She was married to the steward of a liner. He cleared out and left her; and she thought, poor girl, that it was the law that if you hadnt heard of your husband for three years you might marry again. So as she was a thoroughly respectable girl and refused to have anything to say to me unless we were married I went through the ceremony to please her and to

preserve her self-respect.

RIDGEON. Did you tell her you were already married?

LOUIS. Of course not. Dont you see that if she had known, she wouldnt have considered herself my wife? You dont seem to understand, somehow.

SIR PATRICK. You let her risk imprisonment in her ignorance of the law?

LOUIS. Well I risked imprisonment for her sake, I could have been had up for it just as much as she. But when a man makes a sacrifice of that sort for a woman, he doesnt go and brag about it to her; at least, not if he's a gentleman.

WALPOLE. What are we to do with this daisy!

LOUIS [*impatiently*] Oh, go and do whatever the devil you please. Put Minnie in prison. Put me in prison. Kill Jennifer with the disgrace of it all. And then, when youve done all the mischief you can, go to church and feel good about it. [*He sits down pettishly on the old chair at the easel, and takes up a sketching block, on which he begins to draw*].

WALPOLE. He's got us.

SIR PATRICK [*grimly*] He has.

B. B. But is he to be allowed to defy the criminal law of the land?

SIR PATRICK. The criminal law is no use to decent people. It only helps blackguards to blackmail their families. What are we family doctors doing half our time but conspiring with the family solicitor to keep some rascal out of jail and some family out of disgrace?

B. B. But at least it will punish him.

SIR PATRICK. Oh yes: itll punish him. Itll punish not only him but everybody connected with him, innocent and guilty alike. Itll throw his board and lodging on our rates and taxes for a couple of years, and then turn him loose on us a more dangerous blackguard than ever. Itll put the girl in prison and ruin her: itll lay his wife's life waste. You may put the criminal law out of your head once for all: it's

only fit for fools and savages.

LOUIS. Would you mind turning your face a little more this way, Sir Patrick. [*Sir Patrick turns indignantly and glares at him*]. Oh, thats too much.

SIR PATRICK. Put down your foolish pencil, man; and think of your position. You can defy the laws made by men; but there are other laws to reckon with. Do you know that youre going to die?

LOUIS. We're all going to die, arnt we?

WALPOLE. We're not all going to die in six months.

LOUIS. How do you know?

This for B. B. is the last straw. He completely loses his temper and begins to walk excitedly about.

B. B. Upon my soul, I will not stand this. It is in questionable taste under any circumstances or in any company to harp on the subject of death; but it is a dastardly advantage to take of a medical man. [*Thundering at Dubedat*] I will not allow it, do you hear?

LOUIS. Well, I didnt begin it: you chaps did. It's always the way with the inartistic professions: when theyre beaten in argument they fall back on intimidation. I never knew a lawyer yet who didnt threaten to put me in prison sooner or later. I never knew a person who didnt threaten me with damnation. And now you threaten me with death. With all your tall talk youve only one real trump in your hand, and thats Intimidation. Well, I'm not a coward; so it's no use with me.

B. B. [*advancing upon him*] I'll tell you what you are, sir. Youre a scoundrel.

LOUIS. Oh, I dont mind you calling me a scoundrel a bit. It's only a word: a word that you dont know the meaning of. What is a scoundrel?

B. B. You are a scoundrel, sir.

LOUIS. Just so. What is a scoundrel? I am. What am I? A scoundrel. It's just arguing in a circle. And you imagine youre a man of science!

B. B. I—I—I—I have a good mind to take you by the scruff of your neck, you infamous rascal, and give you a sound thrashing.

LOUIS. I wish you would. Youd pay me something handsome to keep it out of court afterwards [*B. B., baffled, flings away from him with a snort*]. Have you any more civilities to address to me in my own house? I should like to get them over before my wife comes back. [*He resumes his sketching*].

RIDGEON. My mind's made up. When the law breaks down, honest men must find a remedy for themselves. I will not lift a finger to save this reptile.

B. B. That is the word I was trying to remember. Reptile.

WALPOLE. I cant help rather liking you, Dubedat. But you certainly are a thoroughgoing specimen.

SIR PATRICK. You know our opinion of you now, at all events.

LOUIS [*patiently putting down his pencil*] Look here. All this is no good. You dont understand. You imagine that I'm simply an ordinary criminal.

WALPOLE. Not an ordinary one, Dubedat. Do yourself justice.

LOUIS. Well, youre on the wrong tack altogether. I'm not a criminal. All your moralizings have no value for me. I dont believe in morality. I'm a disciple of Bernard Shaw.

SIR PATRICK [*puzzled*] Eh?
B. B. [*waving his hand as if the subject were now disposed of*] Thats enough: I wish to hear no more.

LOUIS. Of course I havnt the ridiculous vanity to set up to be exactly a Superman; but still, it's an ideal that I strive towards just as any other man strives towards his ideal.

B. B. [*intolerant*] Dont trouble to explain. I now understand you perfectly. Say no more, please. When a man pretends to discuss science, morals, and religion, and then avows himself a follower of a notorious and avowed anti-

vaccinationist, there is nothing more to be said. [*Suddenly putting in an effusive saving clause in parenthesis to Ridgeon*] Not, my dear Ridgeon, that I believe in vaccination in the popular sense any more than you do: I neednt tell you that. But there are things that place a man socially; and anti-vaccination is one of them. [*He resumes his seat on the dais*].

SIR PATRICK. Bernard Shaw? I never heard of him. He's a Methodist preacher, I suppose.

LOUIS [*scandalized*] No, no. He's the most advanced man now living: he isnt anything.

SIR PATRICK. I assure you, young man, my father learnt the doctrine of deliverance from sin from John Wesley's own lips before you or Mr Shaw were born. It used to be very popular as an excuse for putting sand in sugar and water in milk. Youre a sound Methodist, my lad; only you dont know it.

LOUIS [*seriously annoyed for the first time*] It's an intellectual insult. I dont believe theres such a thing as sin.

SIR PATRICK. Well, sir, there are people who dont believe theres such a thing as disease either. They call themselves Christian Scientists, I believe. Theyll just suit your complaint. We can do nothing for you [*He rises*]. Good afternoon to you.

LOUIS [*running to him piteously*] Oh dont get up, Sir Patrick. Dont go. Please dont. I didnt mean to shock you, on my word. Do sit down again. Give me another chance. Two minutes more: thats all I ask.

SIR PATRICK [*surprised by this sign of grace, and a little touched*] Well—[*He sits down*]—

LOUIS [*gracefully*] Thanks awfully.

SIR PATRICK [*continuing*]—I dont mind giving you two minutes more. But dont address yourself to me; for Ive retired from practice; and I dont pretend to be able to cure your complaint. Your life is in the hands of these gentlemen.

RIDGEON. Not in mine. My hands are full. I have no time

and no means available for this case.

SIR PATRICK. What do you say, Mr Walpole?

WALPOLE. Oh, I'll take him in hand: I dont mind. I feel perfectly convinced that this is not a moral case at all: it's a physical one. Theres something abnormal about his brain. That means, probably, some morbid condition affecting the spinal cord. And that means the circulation. In short, it's clear to me that he's suffering from an obscure form of blood-poisoning, which is almost certainly due to an accumulation of ptomaines in the nuciform sac. I'll remove the sac—

LOUIS [*changing color*] Do you mean, operate on me? Ugh! No, thank you.

WALPOLE. Never fear: you wont feel anything. Youll be under an anæsthetic, of course. And it will be extraordinarily interesting.

LOUIS. Oh, well, if it would interest you, and if it wont hurt, thats another matter. How much will you give me to let you do it?

WALPOLE [*rising indignantly*] How much! What do you mean?

LOUIS. Well, you dont expect me to let you cut me up for nothing, do you?

WALPOLE. Will you paint my portrait for nothing?

LOUIS. No; but I'll give you the portrait when it's painted; and you can sell it afterwards for perhaps double the money. But I cant sell my nuciform sac when youve cut it out.

WALPOLE. Ridgeon: did you ever hear anything like this! [*To Louis*] Well, you can keep your nuciform sac, and your tubercular lung, and your diseased brain: Ive done with you. One would think I was not conferring a favour on the fellow! [*He returns to his stool in high dudgeon*].

SIR PATRICK. That leaves only one medical man who has not withdrawn from your case, Mr Dubedat. You have nobody left to appeal to now but Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonington.

WALPOLE. If I were you, B. B., I shouldnt touch him with

a pair of tongs. Let him take his lungs to the Brompton Hospital. They wont cure him; but theyll teach him manners.

B. B. My weakness is that I have never been able to say No, even to the most thoroughly undeserving people. Besides, I am bound to say that I dont think it is possible in medical practice to go into the question of the value of the lives we save. Just consider, Ridgeon. Let me put it to you, Paddy. Clear your mind of cant, Walpole.

WALPOLE [*indignantly*] My mind is perfectly clear of cant.

B. B. Quite so. Well now, look at my practice. It is what I suppose you would call a fashionable practice, a smart practice, a practice among the best people. You ask me to go into the question of whether my patients are of any use either to themselves or anyone else. Well, if you apply any scientific test known to me, you will achieve a reductio ad absurdum. You will be driven to the conclusion that the majority of them would be, as my friend Mr J. M. Barrie has tersely phrased it, better dead. Better dead. There are exceptions, no doubt. For instance, there is the court, an essentially social-democratic institution, supported out of public funds by the public because the public wants it and likes it. My court patients are hard-working people who give satisfaction, undoubtedly. Then I have a duke or two whose estates are probably better managed than they would be in public hands. But as to most of the rest, if I once began to argue about them, unquestionably the verdict would be, Better dead. When they actually do die, I sometimes have to offer that consolation, thinly disguised, to the family. [*Lulled by the cadences of his own voice, he becomes drowsier and drowsier*]. The fact that they spend money so extravagantly on medical attendance really would not justify me in wasting my talents—such as they are—in keeping them alive. After all, if my fees are high, I have to spend heavily. My own tastes are simple: a camp bed, a couple of rooms, a crust, a bottle of wine: and I am happy and

contented. My wife's tastes are perhaps more luxurious: but even she deplores an expenditure the sole object of which is to maintain the state my patients require from their medical attendant. The—er—er—er—[*suddenly waking up*] I have lost the thread of these remarks. What was I talking about Ridgeon?

RIDGEON. About Dubedat.

B. B. Ah yes. Precisely. Thank you. Dubedat, of course. Well, what is our friend Dubedat? A vicious and ignorant young man with a talent for drawing.

LOUIS. Thank you. Dont mind me.

B. B. But then, what are many of my patients? Vicious and ignorant young men without a talent for anything. If I were to stop to argue about their merits I should have to give up three-quarters of my practice. Therefore I have made it a rule not so to argue. Now, as an honorable man, having made that rule as to paying patients, can I make an exception as to a patient who, far from being a paying patient, may more fitly be described as a borrowing patient. No. I say No. Mr Dubedat: your moral character is nothing to me. I look at you from a purely scientific point of view. To me you are simply a field of battle in which an invading army of tubercle bacilli struggles with a patriotic force of phagocytes. Having made a promise to your wife, which my principles will not allow me to break, to stimulate those phagocytes, I will stimulate them. And I take no further responsibility. [*He flings himself back in his seat exhausted*].

SIR PATRICK. Well, Mr Dubedat, as Sir Ralph has very kindly offered to take charge of your case, and as the two minutes I promised you are up, I must ask you to excuse me. [*He rises*].

LOUIS. Oh, certainly. Ive quite done with you. [*Rising and holding up the sketch block*] There! While youve been talking, Ive been doing. What is there left of your moralizing? Only a little carbonic acid gas which makes the room unhealthy. What is there left of my work? That. Look at it.

[*Ridgeon rises to look at it*].

SIR PATRICK [*who has come down to him from the throne*] You young rascal, was it drawing me you were?

LOUIS. Of course. What else?

SIR PATRICK [*takes the drawing from him and grunts approvingly*] Thats rather good. Dont you think so, Colly?

RIDGEON. Yes. So good that I should like to have it.

SIR PATRICK. Thank you; but I should like to have it myself. What d'ye think, Walpole?

WALPOLE [*rising and coming over to look*] No, by Jove: *I* must have this.

LOUIS. I wish I could afford to give it to you, Sir Patrick. But I'd pay five guineas sooner than part with it.

RIDGEON. Oh, for that matter, I will give you six for it.

WALPOLE. Ten.

LOUIS. I think Sir Patrick is morally entitled to it, as he sat for it. May I send it to your house, Sir Patrick, for twelve guineas?

SIR PATRICK. Twelve guineas! Not if you were President of the Royal Academy, young man. [*He gives him back the drawing decisively and turns away, taking up his hat*].

LOUIS [*to B. B.*] Would you like to take it at twelve, Sir Ralph?

B. B. [*coming between Louis and Walpole*] Twelve guineas? Thank you: I'll take it at that. [*He takes it and presents it to Sir Patrick*] Accept it from me, Paddy; and may you long be spared to contemplate it.

SIR PATRICK. Thank you. [*He puts the drawing into his hat*].

B. B. I neednt settle with you now, Mr Dubedat: my fees will come to more than that. [*He also retrieves his hat*].

LOUIS [*indignantly*] Well, of all the mean—[*words fail him*]! I'd let myself be shot sooner than do a thing like that. I consider youve stolen that drawing.

SIR PATRICK [*drily*] So weve converted you to a belief in morality after all, eh?

LOUIS. Yah! [*To Walpole*] I'll do another one for you, Walpole, if youll let me have the ten you promised.

WALPOLE. Very good. I'll pay on delivery.

LOUIS. Oh! What do you take me for? Have you no confidence in my honor?

WALPOLE. None whatever.

LOUIS. Oh well, of course if you feel that way, you cant help it. Before you go, Sir Patrick, let me fetch Jennifer. I know she'd like to see you, if you dont mind. [*He goes to the inner door*]. And now, before she comes in, one word. Youve all been talking here pretty freely about me—in my own house too. *I* dont mind that: I'm a man and can take care of myself. But when Jennifer comes in, please remember that she's a lady, and that you are supposed to be gentlemen. [*He goes out*].

WALPOLE Well!!! [*He gives the situation up as indescribable, and goes for his hat*].

RIDGEON. Damn his impudence!

B. B. I shouldnt be at all surprised to learn that he's well connected. Whenever I meet dignity and self-possession without any discoverable basis, I diagnose good family.

RIDGEON. Diagnose artistic genius, B. B. Thats what saves his self-respect.

SIR PATRICK. The world is made like that. The decent fellows are always being lectured and put out of countenance by the snobs.

B. B. [*altogether refusing to accept this*] *I* am not out of countenance. I should like, by Jupiter, to see the man who could put me out of countenance. [*Jennifer comes in*]. Ah, Mrs Dubedat! And how are we today?

MRS DUBEDAT [*shaking hands with him*] Thank you all so much for coming. [*She shakes Walpole's hand*]. Thank you, Sir Patrick [*she shakes Sir Patrick's*]. Oh, life has been worth living since I have known you. Since Richmond I have not known a moment's fear. And it used to be nothing but fear. Wont you sit down and tell me the result of the consultation.

WALPOLE. I'll go, if you dont mind, Mrs Dubedat. I have an appointment. Before I go, let me say that I am quite agreed with my colleagues here as to the character of the case. As to the cause and the remedy, thats not my business: I'm only a surgeon; and these gentlemen are physicians and will advise you. I may have my own views: in fact I have them; and they are perfectly well known to my colleagues. If I am needed—and needed I shall be finally—they know where to find me; and I am always at your service. So for today, goodbye. [*He goes out, leaving Jennifer much puzzled by his unexpected withdrawal and formal manner*].

SIR PATRICK. I also will ask you to excuse me, Mrs Dubedat.

RIDGEON [*anxiously*] Are you going?

SIR PATRICK. Yes: I can be of no use here; and I must be getting back. As you know, maam, I'm not in practice now; and I shall not be in charge of the case. It rests between Sir Colenso Ridgeon and Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonington. They know my opinion. Good afternoon to you, maam. [*He bows and makes for the door*].

MRS DUBEDAT [*detaining him*] Theres nothing wrong, is there? You dont think Louis is worse, do you?

SIR PATRICK. No: he's not worse. Just the same as at Richmond.

MRS DUBEDAT. Oh, thank you: you frightened me. Excuse me.

SIR PATRICK. Dont mention it, maam. [*He goes out*].

B. B. Now, Mrs Dubedat, if I am to take the patient in hand—

MRS DUBEDAT [*apprehensively, with a glance at Ridgeon*] You! But I thought that Sir Colenso—

B. B. [*beaming with the conviction that he is giving her a most gratifying surprise*] My dear lady, your husband shall have Me.

MRS DUBEDAT. But—

B. B. Not a word: it is a pleasure to me, for your sake. Sir Colenso Ridgeon will be in his proper place, in the

bacteriological laboratory. *I* shall be in my proper place, at the bedside. Your husband shall be treated exactly as if he were a member of the royal family. [*Mrs Dubedat uneasy, again is about to protest*]. No gratitude: it would embarrass me, I assure you. Now, may I ask whether you are particularly tied to these apartments. Of course, the motor has annihilated distance; but I confess that if you were rather nearer to me, it would be a little more convenient.

MRS DUBEDAT. You see, this studio and flat are self-contained. I have suffered so much in lodgings. The servants are so frightfully dishonest.

B. B. Ah! Are they? Are they? Dear me!

MRS DUBEDAT. I was never accustomed to lock things up. And I missed so many small sums. At last a dreadful thing happened. I missed a five-pound note. It was traced to the housemaid; and she actually said Louis had given it to her. And he wouldnt let me do anything: he is so sensitive that these things drive him mad.

B. B. Ah—hm—ha—yes—say no more, Mrs Dubedat: you shall not move. If the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must come to the mountain. Now I must be off. I will write and make an appointment. We shall begin stimulating the phagocytes on—on—probably on Tuesday next; but I will let you know. Depend on me; dont fret; eat regularly; sleep well; keep your spirits up; keep the patient cheerful; hope for the best; no tonic like a charming woman; no medicine like cheerfulness; no resource like science; goodbye, goodbye, goodbye. [*Having shaken hands —she being too overwhelmed to speak—he goes out, stopping to say to Ridgeon*] On Tuesday morning send me down a tube of some really stiff anti-toxin. Any kind will do. Dont forget. Goodbye, Colly. [*He goes out*].

RIDGEON. You look quite discouraged again. [*She is almost in tears*]. Whats the matter? Are you disappointed?

MRS DUBEDAT. I know I ought to be very grateful. Believe me, I am very grateful. But—but—

RIDGEON. Well?

MRS DUBEDAT. I had set my heart on your curing Louis.

RIDGEON. Well, Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonington—

MRS DUBEDAT. Yes, I know, I know. It is a great privilege to have him. But oh, I wish it had been you. I know it's unreasonable; I cant explain; but I had such a strong instinct that you would cure him. I dont—I cant feel the same about Sir Ralph. You promised me. Why did you give Louis up?

RIDGEON. I explained to you. I cannot take another case.

MRS DUBEDAT. But at Richmond?

RIDGEON. At Richmond I thought I could make room for one more case. But my old friend Dr Blenkinsop claimed that place. His lung is attacked.

MRS DUBEDAT [*attaching no importance whatever to Blenkinsop*] Do you mean that elderly man—that rather silly—

RIDGEON [*sternly*] I mean the gentleman that dined with us: an excellent and honest man, whose life is as valuable as anyone else's. I have arranged that I shall take his case, and that Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonington shall take Mr Dubedat's.

MRS DUBEDAT [*turning indignantly on him*] I see what it is. Oh! it is envious, mean, cruel. And I thought that you would be above such a thing.

RIDGEON. What do you mean?

MRS DUBEDAT. Oh, do you think I dont know? do you think it has never happened before? Why does everybody turn against him? Can you not forgive him for being superior to you? for being cleverer? for being braver? for being a great artist?

RIDGEON. Yes: I can forgive him for all that.

MRS DUBEDAT. Well, have you anything to say against him? I have challenged everyone who has turned against him—challenged them face to face to tell me any wrong thing he has done, any ignoble thought he has uttered. They have always confessed that they could not tell me one. I

challenge you now. What do you accuse him of?

RIDGEON. I am like all the rest. Face to face, I cannot tell you one thing against him.

MRS DUBEDAT [*not satisfied*] But your manner is changed. And you have broken your promise to me to make room for him as your patient.

RIDGEON. I think you are a little unreasonable. You have had the very best medical advice in London for him; and his case has been taken in hand by a leader of the profession. Surely—

MRS DUBEDAT. Oh, it is so cruel to keep telling me that. It seems all right; and it puts me in the wrong. But I am not in the wrong. I have faith in you; and I have no faith in the others. We have seen so many doctors: I have come to know at last when they are only talking and can do nothing. It is different with you. I feel that you know. You must listen to me, doctor. [*With sudden misgiving*] Am I offending you by calling you doctor instead of remembering your title?

RIDGEON. Nonsense. I am a doctor. But mind you dont call Walpole one.

MRS DUBEDAT. I dont care about Mr Walpole: it is you who must befriend me. Oh, will you please sit down and listen to me just for a few minutes. [*He assents with a grave inclination, and sits on the sofa. She sits on the easel chair*]. Thank you. I wont keep you long; but I must tell you the whole truth. Listen. I know Louis as nobody else in the world knows him or ever can know him. I am his wife. I know he has little faults: impatience, sensitiveness, even little selfishnesses that are too trivial for him to notice. I know that he sometimes shocks people about money because he is so utterly above it, and cant understand the value ordinary people set on it. Tell me: did he—did he borrow any money from you?

RIDGEON. He asked me for some—once.

MRS DUBEDAT [*tears again in her eyes*] Oh, I am so sorry

—so sorry. But he will never do it again: I pledge you my word for that. He has given me his promise: here in this room just before you came; and he is incapable of breaking his word. That was his only real weakness; and now it is conquered and done with for ever.

RIDGEON. Was that really his only weakness?

MRS DUBEDAT. He is perhaps sometimes weak about women, because they adore him so, and are always laying traps for him. And of course when he says he doesnt believe in morality, ordinary pious people think he must be wicked. You can understand, cant you, how all this starts a great deal of gossip about him, and gets repeated until even good friends get set against him?

RIDGEON. Yes: I understand.

MRS DUBEDAT. Oh, if you only knew the other side of him as I do! Do you know, doctor, that if Louis dishonored himself by a really bad action, I should kill myself.

RIDGEON. Come! dont exaggerate.

MRS DUBEDAT. I should. You dont understand that, you east country people.

RIDGEON. You did not see much of the world in Cornwall, did you?

MRS DUBEDAT [*naïvely*] Oh yes. I saw a great deal every day of the beauty of the world—more than you ever see here in London. But I saw very few people, if that is what you mean. I was an only child.

RIDGEON. That explains a good deal.

MRS DUBEDAT. I had a great many dreams; but at last they all came to one dream.

RIDGEON [*with half a sigh*] Yes, the usual dream.

MRS DUBEDAT [*surprised*] Is it usual?

RIDGEON. As I guess. You havnt yet told me what it was.

MRS DUBEDAT. I didnt want to waste myself. I could do nothing myself; but I had a little property and I could help with it. I had even a little beauty: dont think me vain for knowing it. I knew that men of genius always had a terrible

struggle with poverty and neglect at first. My dream was to save one of them from that, and bring some charm and happiness into his life. I prayed Heaven to send me one. I firmly believe that Louis was guided to me in answer to my prayer. He was no more like the other men I had met than the Thames Embankment is like our Cornish coasts. He saw everything that I saw, and drew it for me. He understood everything. He came to me like a child. Only fancy, doctor: he never even wanted to marry me: he never thought of the things other men think of! I had to propose it myself. Then he said he had no money. When I told him I had some, he said "Oh, all right", just like a boy. He is still like that, quite unspoiled, a man in his thoughts, a great poet and artist in his dreams, and a child in his ways. I gave him myself and all that I had that he might grow to his full height with plenty of sunshine. If I lost faith in him, it would mean the wreck and failure of my life. I should go back to Cornwall and die. I could show you the very cliff I should jump off. You must cure him: you must make him quite well again for me. I know that you can do it and that nobody else can. I implore you not to refuse what I am going to ask you to do. Take Louis yourself: and let Sir Ralph cure Dr Blenkinsop.

RIDGEON [*slowly*] Mrs Dubedat: do you really believe in my knowledge and skill as you say you do?

MRS DUBEDAT. Absolutely. I do not give my trust by halves.

RIDGEON. I know that. Well, I am going to test you—hard. Will you believe me when I tell you that I understand what you have just told me; that I have no desire but to serve you in the most faithful friendship; and that your hero must be preserved to you.

MRS DUBEDAT. Oh forgive me. Forgive what I said. You will preserve him to me.

RIDGEON. At all hazards. [*She kisses his hand. He rises hastily*]. No: you have not heard the rest. [*She rises too*].

You must believe me when I tell you that the one chance of preserving the hero lies in Louis being in the care of Sir Ralph.

MRS DUBEDAT [*firmly*] You say so: I have no more doubt: I believe you. Thank you.

RIDGEON. Goodbye. [*She takes his hand*] I hope this will be a lasting friendship.

MRS DUBEDAT. It will. My friendships end only with death.

RIDGEON. Death ends everything, doesnt it? Goodbye.

With a sigh and a look of pity at her which she does not understand, he goes.

ACT IV

The studio. The easel is pushed back to the wall. Cardinal Death, holding his scythe and hour-glass like a sceptre and globe, sits on the throne. On the hat-stand hang the hats of Sir Patrick and Bloomfield Bonington. Walpole, just come in, is hanging up his beside them. There is a knock. He opens the door and finds Ridgeon there.

WALPOLE. Hallo, Ridgeon!

They come into the middle of the room together, taking off their gloves.

RIDGEON. Whats the matter? Have you been sent for, too.

WALPOLE. Weve all been sent for. Ive only just come: I havnt seen him yet. The charwoman says that old Paddy Cullen has been here with B. B. for the last half-hour. [*Sir Patrick, with bad news in his face, enters from the inner room*]. Well: whats up?

SIR PATRICK. Go in and see. B. B. is in there with him.

Walpole goes. Ridgeon is about to follow him; but Sir Patrick stops him with a look.

RIDGEON. What has happened?

SIR PATRICK. Do you remember Jane Marsh's arm?

RIDGEON. Is that whats happened?

SIR PATRICK. Thats whats happened. His lung has gone like Jane's arm. I never saw such a case. He has got through three months galloping consumption in three days.

RIDGEON. B. B. got in on the negative phase.

SIR PATRICK. Negative or positive, the lad's done for. He wont last out the afternoon. He'll go suddenly: Ive often seen it.

RIDGEON. So long as he goes before his wife finds him out, *I* dont care. I fully expected this.

SIR PATRICK [*drily*] It's a little hard on a lad to be killed because his wife has too high an opinion of him. Fortunately few of us are in any danger of that.

Sir Ralph comes from the inner room and hastens between them, humanely concerned, but professionally elate and communicative.

B. B. Ah, here you are, Ridgeon. Paddy's told you, of course.

RIDGEON. Yes.

B. B. It's an enormously interesting case. You know, Colly, by Jupiter, if I didnt know as a matter of scientific fact that I'd been stimulating the phagocytes, I should say I'd been stimulating the other things. What is the explanation of it, Sir Patrick? How do you account for it, Ridgeon? Have we over-stimulated the phagocytes? Have they not only eaten up the bacilli, but attacked and destroyed the red corpuscles as well? a possibility suggested by the patient's pallor. Nay, have they finally begun to prey on the lungs themselves? Or on one another? I shall write a paper about this case.

Walpole comes back, very serious, even shocked. He comes between B. B. and Ridgeon.

WALPOLE. Whew! B. B.: youve done it this time.

B. B. What do you mean?

WALPOLE. Killed him. The worst case of neglected blood-poisoning I ever saw. It's too late now to do anything. He'd die under the anæsthetic.

B. B. [*offended*] Killed! Really, Walpole, if your monomania were not well known, I should take such an expression very seriously.

SIR PATRICK. Come come! When youve both killed as many people as I have in my time youll feel humble enough about it. Come and look at him, Colly.

Ridgeon and Sir Patrick go into the inner room.

WALPOLE. I apologize, B. B. But it's blood-poisoning.

B. B. [*recovering his irresistible good nature*] My dear Walpole, everything is blood-poisoning. But upon my soul, I shall not use any of that stuff of Ridgeon's again. What made me so sensitive about what you said just now is that,

strictly between ourselves, Ridgeon has cooked our young friend's goose.

Jennifer, worried and distressed, but always gentle, comes between them from the inner room. She wears a nurse's apron.

MRS DUBEDAT. Sir Ralph: what am I to do? That man who insisted on seeing me, and sent in word that his business was important to Louis, is a newspaper man. A paragraph appeared in the paper this morning saying that Louis is seriously ill; and this man wants to interview him about it. How can people be so brutally callous?

WALPOLE [*moving vengefully towards the door*] You just leave me to deal with him!

MRS DUBEDAT [*stopping him*] But Louis insists on seeing him: he almost began to cry about it. And he says he cant bear his room any longer. He says he wants to [*she struggles with a sob*]—to die in his studio. Sir Patrick says let him have his way: it can do no harm. What shall we do?

B. B. [*encouragingly*] Why, follow Sir Patrick's excellent advice, of course. As he says, it can do him no harm; and it will no doubt do him good—a great deal of good. He will be much the better for it.

MRS DUBEDAT [*a little cheered*] Will you bring the man up here, Mr Walpole, and tell him that he may see Louis, but that he mustnt exhaust him by talking? [*Walpole nods and goes out by the outer door*]. Sir Ralph: dont be angry with me; but Louis will die if he stays here. I must take him to Cornwall. He will recover there.

B.B. [*brightening wonderfully, as if Dubedat were already saved*] Cornwall! The very place for him! Wonderful for the lungs. Stupid of me not to think of it before. You are his best physician after all, dear lady. An inspiration! Cornwall: of course, yes, yes, yes.

MRS DUBEDAT [*comforted and touched*] You are so kind, Sir Ralph. But dont give me much hope or I shall cry; and Louis cant bear that.

B. B. [*gently putting his protecting arm round her shoulders*] Then let us come back to him and help to carry him in. Cornwall! of course, of course. The very thing! [*They go together into the bedroom*].

Walpole returns with The Newspaper Man, a cheerful, affable young man who is disabled for ordinary business pursuits by a congenital erroneousness which renders him incapable of describing accurately anything he sees, or understanding or reporting accurately anything he hears. As the only employment in which these defects do not matter is journalism (for a newspaper, not having to act on its descriptions and reports, but only to sell them to idly curious people, has nothing but honor to lose by inaccuracy and unveracity), he has perforce become a journalist, and has to keep up an air of high spirits through a daily struggle with his own illiteracy and the precariousness of his employment. He has a note-book, and occasionally attempts to make a note; but as he cannot write shorthand, and does not write with ease in any hand, he generally gives it up as a bad job before he succeeds in finishing a sentence.

THE NEWSPAPER MAN [*looking round and making indecisive attempts at notes*] This is the studio, I suppose.

WALPOLE. Yes.

THE NEWSPAPER MAN [*wittily*] Where he has his models, eh?

WALPOLE [*grimly irresponsive*] No doubt.

THE NEWSPAPER MAN. Cubicle, you said it was?

WALPOLE. Yes, tubercle.

THE NEWSPAPER MAN. Which way do you spell it: is it c-u-b-i-c-a-l or c-l-e?

WALPOLE. Tubercle, man, not cubical. [*Spelling it for him*] T-u-b-e-r-c-l-e.

THE NEWSPAPER MAN. Oh! tubercle. Some disease, I suppose. I thought he had consumption. Are you one of the family or the doctor?

WALPOLE. I'm neither one nor the other. I am Mister

Cutler Walpole. Put that down. Then put down Sir Colenso Ridgeon.

THE NEWSPAPER MAN. Pigeon?

WALPOLE. Ridgeon. [*Contemptuously snatching his book*] Here: youd better let me write the names down for you: youre sure to get them wrong. That comes of belonging to an illiterate profession, with no qualifications and no public register. [*He writes the particulars*].

THE NEWSPAPER MAN. Oh, I say: you have got your knife into us, havnt you?

WALPOLE [*vindictively*] I wish I had: I'd make a better man of you. Now attend. [*Shewing him the book*] These are the names of the three doctors. This is the patient. This is the address. This is the name of the disease. [*He shuts the book with a snap which makes the journalist blink, and returns it to him*]. Mr Dubedat will be brought in here presently. He wants to see you because he doesnt know how bad he is. We'll allow you to wait a few minutes to humor him; but if you talk to him, out you go. He may die at any moment.

THE NEWSPAPER MAN [*interested*] Is he as bad as that? I say: I am in luck today. Would you mind letting me photograph you? [*He produces a camera*] Could you have a lancet or something in your hand?

WALPOLE. Put it up. If you want my photograph you can get it in Baker Street in any of the series of celebrities.

THE NEWSPAPER MAN. But theyll want to be paid. If you wouldnt mind [*fingering the camera*]—?

WALPOLE. I would. Put it up, I tell you. Sit down there and be quiet.

The Newspaper Man quickly sits down on the piano stool as Dubedat, in an invalid's chair, is wheeled in by Mrs Dubedat and Sir Ralph. They place the chair between the dais and the sofa, where the easel stood before. Louis is not changed as a robust man would be; and he is not scared. His eyes look larger; and he is so weak physically that he

can hardly move, lying on his cushions with complete languor; but his mind is active: it is making the most of his condition, finding voluptuousness in languor and drama in death. They are all impressed, in spite of themselves, except Ridgeon, who is implacable. B. B. is entirely sympathetic and forgiving. Ridgeon follows the chair with a tray of milk and stimulants. Sir Patrick, who accompanies him, takes the tea-table from the corner and places it behind the chair for the tray. B. B. takes the easel chair and places it for Jennifer at Dubedat's side, next the dais, from which the lay figure ogles the dying artist. B. B. then returns to Dubedat's left. Jennifer sits. Walpole sits down on the edge of the dais. Ridgeon stands near him.

LOUIS [*blissfully*] Thats happiness. To be in a studio! Happiness!

MRS DUBEDAT. Yes, dear. Sir Patrick says you may stay here as long as you like.

LOUIS. Jennifer.

MRS DUBEDAT. Yes, my darling.

LOUIS. Is the newspaper man here?

THE NEWSPAPER MAN [*glibly*] Yes, Mr Dubedat: I'm here, at your service. I represent the press. I thought you might like to let us have a few words about—about—er—well, a few words on your illness, and your plans for the season.

LOUIS. My plans for the season are very simple. I'm going to die.

MRS DUBEDAT [*tortured*] Louis—dearest—

LOUIS. My darling: I'm very weak and tired. Dont put on me the horrible strain of pretending that I dont know. Ive been lying there listening to the doctors—laughing to myself. They know. Dearest: dont cry. It makes you ugly; and I cant bear that. [*She dries her eyes and recovers herself with a proud effort*]. I want you to promise me something.

MRS DUBEDAT. Yes, yes: you know I will. [*Imploringly*] Only, my love, my love, dont talk: it will waste your strength.

LOUIS. No: it will only use it up. Ridgeon: give me something to keep me going for a few minutes—not one of your confounded anti-toxins, if you dont mind. I have some things to say before I go.

RIDGEON [*looking at Sir Patrick*] I suppose it can do no harm? [*He pours out some spirit, and is about to add soda water when Sir Patrick corrects him*].

SIR PATRICK. In milk. Dont set him coughing.

LOUIS [*after drinking*] Jennifer.

MRS DUBEDAT. Yes, dear.

LOUIS. If theres one thing I hate more than another, it's a widow. Promise me that youll never be a widow.

MRS DUBEDAT. My dear, what do you mean?

LOUIS. I want you to look beautiful. I want people to see in your eyes that you were married to me. The people in Italy used to point at Dante and say "There goes the man who has been in hell." I want them to point at you and say "There goes a woman who has been in heaven." It has been heaven, darling hasnt it—sometimes?

MRS DUBEDAT. Oh yes, yes. Always, always.

LOUIS. If you wear black and cry, people will say "Look at that miserable woman: her husband made her miserable."

MRS DUBEDAT. No, never. You are the light and the blessing of my life. I never lived until I knew you.

LOUIS [*his eyes glistening*] Then you must always wear beautiful dresses and splendid magic jewels. Think of all the wonderful pictures I shall never paint. [*She wins a terrible victory over a sob*]. Well, you must be transfigured with all the beauty of those pictures. Men must get such dreams from seeing you as they never could get from any daubing with paints and brushes. Painters must paint you as they never painted any mortal woman before. There must be a great tradition of beauty, a great atmosphere of wonder and romance. That is what men must always think of when they think of me. That is the sort of immortality I want. You can make that for me. Jennifer. There are lots of things you

dont understand that every woman in the street understands; but you can understand that and do it as nobody else can. Promise me that immortality. Promise me you will not make a little hell of crape and crying and undertaker's horrors and withering flowers and all that vulgar rubbish.

MRS DUBEDAT. I promise. But all that is far off, dear. You are to come to Cornwall with me and get well. Sir Ralph says so.

LOUIS. Poor old B. B.!

B. B. [*affected to tears, turns away and whispers to Sir Patrick*] Poor fellow! Brain going.

LOUIS. Sir Patrick's there, isnt he?

SIR PATRICK. Yes, yes. I'm here.

LOUIS. Sit down, wont you? It's a shame to keep you standing about.

SIR PATRICK. Yes, yes. Thank you. All right.

LOUIS. Jennifer.

MRS DUBEDAT. Yes, dear.

LOUIS [*with a strange look of delight*] Do you remember the burning bush?

MRS DUBEDAT. Yes, yes. Oh, my dear, how it strains my heart to remember it now!

LOUIS. Does it? It fills me with joy. Tell them about it.

MRS DUBEDAT. It was nothing—only that once in my old Cornish home we lit the first fire of the winter; and when we looked through the window we saw the flames dancing in a bush in the garden.

LOUIS. Such a color! Garnet color. Waving like silk. Liquid lovely flame flowing up through the bay leaves, and not burning them. Well, I shall be a flame like that. I'm sorry to disappoint the poor little worms; but the last of me shall be the flame in the burning bush. Whenever you see the flame, Jennifer, that will be me. Promise me that I shall be burnt.

MRS DUBEDAT. Oh, if I might be with you, Louis!

LOUIS. No: you must always be in the garden when the

bush flames. You are my hold on the world: you are my immortality. Promise.

MRS DUBEDAT. I'm listening. I shall not forget. You know that I promise.

LOUIS. Well, thats about all; except that you are to hang my pictures at the one-man show. I can trust your eye. You wont let anyone else touch them.

MRS DUBEDAT. You can trust me.

LOUIS. Then theres nothing more to worry about, is there? Give me some more of that milk. I'm fearfully tired; but if I stop talking I shant begin again. [*Sir Ralph gives him a drink. He takes it and looks up quaintly*]. I say, B. B., do you think anything would stop you talking?

B. B. [*almost unmanned*] He confuses me with you, Paddy. Poor fellow! Poor fellow!

LOUIS [*musing*] I used to be awfully afraid of death; but now it's come I have no fear; and I'm perfectly happy. Jennifer.

MRS DUBEDAT. Yes, dear?

LOUIS. I'll tell you a secret. I used to think that our marriage was all an affectation, and that I'd break loose and run away some day. But now that I'm going to be broken loose whether I like it or not, I'm perfectly fond of you, and perfectly satisfied because I'm going to live as part of you and not as my troublesome self.

MRS DUBEDAT [*heartbroken*] Stay with me, Louis. Oh, dont leave me, dearest.

LOUIS. Not that I'm selfish. With all my faults I dont think Ive ever been really selfish. No artist can: Art is too large for that. You will marry again, Jennifer.

MRS DUBEDAT. Oh, how can you, Louis?

LOUIS [*insisting childishly*] Yes, because people who have found marriage happy always marry again. Ah, *I* shant be jealous. [*Slyly*] But dont talk to the other fellow too much about me: he wont like it. [*Almost chuckling*] *I* shall be your lover all the time; but it will be a secret from him,

poor devil!

SIR PATRICK. Come! youve talked enough. Try to rest awhile.

LOUIS [*wearily*] Yes: I'm fearfully tired; but I shall have a long rest presently. I have something to say to you fellows. Youre all there, arnt you? I'm too weak to see anything but Jennifer's bosom. That promises rest.

RIDGEON. We are all here.

LOUIS [*startled*] That voice sounded devilish. Take care, Ridgeon: my ears hear things that other people's ears cant. Ive been thinking—thinking. I'm cleverer than you imagine.

SIR PATRICK [*whispering to Ridgeon*] Youve got on his nerves, Colly. Slip out quietly.

RIDGEON [*apart to Sir Patrick*] Would you deprive the dying actor of his audience?

LOUIS [*his face lighting up faintly with mischievous glee*] I heard that, Ridgeon. That was good. Jennifer, dear: be kind to Ridgeon always; because he was the last man who amused me.

RIDGEON [*relentless*] Was I?

LOUIS. But it's not true. It's you who are still on the stage. I'm half way home already.

MRS DUBEDAT [*to Ridgeon*] What did you say?

LOUIS [*answering for him*] Nothing, dear. Only one of those little secrets that men keep among themselves. Well, all you chaps have thought pretty hard things of me, and said them.

B. B. [*quite overcome*] No, no, Dubedat. Not at all.

LOUIS. Yes, you have. I know what you all think of me. Dont imagine I'm sore about it. I forgive you.

WALPOLE [*involuntarily*] Well, damn me! [*Ashamed*] I beg your pardon.

LOUIS. That was old Walpole, I know. Dont grieve, Walpole. I'm perfectly happy. I'm not in pain. I dont want to live. Ive escaped from myself. I'm in heaven, immortal in the heart of my beautiful Jennifer. I'm not afraid, and not

ashamed. [*Reflectively, puzzling it out for himself weakly*] I know that in an accidental sort of way, struggling through the unreal part of life, I havnt always been able to live up to my ideal. But in my own real world I have never done anything wrong, never denied my faith, never been untrue to myself. Ive been threatened and blackmailed and insulted and starved. But Ive played the game. Ive fought the good fight. And now it's all over, theres an indescribable peace. [*He feebly holds his hands and utters his creed*]: I believe in Michael Angelo, Velasquez, and Rembrandt; in the might of design, the mystery of color, the redemption of all things by Beauty everlasting, and the message of Art that has made these hands blessed. Amen. Amen. [*He closes his eyes and lies still*].

MRS DUBEDAT [*breathless*] Louis: are you—

Walpole rises and comes quickly to see whether he is dead.

LOUIS. Not yet, dear. Very nearly, but not yet. I should like to rest my head on your bosom; only it would tire you.

MRS DUBEDAT. No, no, no, darling: how could you tire me? [*She lifts him so that he lies in her bosom*].

LOUIS. Thats good. Thats real.

MRS DUBEDAT. Dont spare me, dear. Indeed indeed you will not tire me. Lean on me with all your weight.

LOUIS [*with a sudden half return of his normal strength and comfort*] Jinny Gwinny: I think I shall recover after all. [*Sir Patrick looks significantly at Ridgeon, mutely warning him that this is the end*].

MRS DUBEDAT [*hopefully*] Yes, yes: you shall.

LOUIS. Because I suddenly want to sleep. Just an ordinary sleep.

MRS DUBEDAT [*rocking him*] Yes, dear. Sleep. [*He seems to go to sleep. Walpole makes another movement. She protests*]. Sh-sh: please dont disturb him. [*His lips move*]. What did you say, dear? [*In great distress*] I cant listen without moving him. [*His lips move again: Walpole bends down and listens*].

WALPOLE. He wants to know is the newspaper man here.

THE NEWSPAPER MAN [*excited; for he has been enjoying himself enormously*] Yes, Mr Dubedat. Here I am.

Walpole raises his hand warningly to silence him. Sir Ralph sits down quietly on the sofa and frankly buries his face in his handkerchief.

MRS DUBEDAT [*with great relief*] Oh thats right, dear: dont spare me: lean with all your weight on me. Now you are really resting.

Sir Patrick quickly comes forward and feels Louis's pulse; then takes him by the shoulders.

SIR PATRICK. Let me put him back on the pillow, maam. He will be better so.

MRS DUBEDAT [*piteously*] Oh no, please, please, doctor. He is not tiring me; and he will be so hurt when he wakes if he finds I have put him away.

SIR PATRICK. He will never wake again. [*He takes the body from her and replaces it in the chair. Ridgeon, unmoved, lets down the back and makes a bier of it*].

MRS DUBEDAT [*who has unexpectedly sprung to her feet, and stands dry-eyed and stately*] Was that death?

WALPOLE. Yes.

MRS DUBEDAT [*with complete dignity*] Will you wait for me a moment. I will come back. [*She goes out*].

WALPOLE. Ought we to follow her? Is she in her right senses?

SIR PATRICK [*with quiet conviction*] Yes. She's all right. Leave her alone. She'll come back.

RIDGEON. [*callously*] Let us get this thing out of the way before she comes.

B. B. [*rising, shocked*] My dear Colly! The poor lad! He died splendidly.

SIR PATRICK. Aye! that is how the wicked die.

For there are no bands in their death;
But their strength is firm:
They are not in trouble as other men.

No matter: it's not for us to judge. He's in another world now.

WALPOLE. Borrowing his first five-pound note there, probably.

RIDGEON. I said the other day that the most tragic thing in the world is a sick doctor. I was wrong. The most tragic thing in the world is a man of genius who is not also a man of honor.

Ridgeon and Walpole wheel the chair into the recess.

THE NEWSPAPER MAN [*to Sir Ralph*] I thought it shewed a very nice feeling, his being so particular about his wife going into proper mourning for him and making her promise never to marry again.

B. B. [*impressively*] Mrs Dubedat is not in a position to carry the interview any further. Neither are we.

SIR PATRICK. Good afternoon to you.

THE NEWSPAPER MAN. Mrs Dubedat said she was coming back.

B. B. After you have gone.

THE NEWSPAPER MAN. Do you think she would give me a few words on How It Feels to be a Widow? Rather a good title for an article, isnt it?

B. B. Young man: if you wait until Mrs Dubedat comes back, you will be able to write an article on How It Feels to be Turned Out of the House.

THE NEWSPAPER MAN [*unconvinced*] You think she'd rather not—

B. B. [*cutting him short*] Good day to you. [*Giving him a visiting-card*] Mind you get my name correctly. Good day.

THE NEWSPAPER MAN. Good day. Thank you. [*Vaguely trying to read the card*] Mr—

B. B. No, not Mister. This is your hat, I think [*giving it to him*]. Gloves? No, of course: no gloves. Good day to you. [*He edges him out at last; shuts the door on him; and returns to Sir Patrick as Ridgeon and Walpole come back from the recess, Walpole crossing the room to the hat-stand, and*

Ridgeon coming between Sir Ralph and Sir Patrick]. Poor fellow! Poor young fellow! How well he died! I feel a better man, really.

SIR PATRICK. When youre as old as I àm, youll know that it matters very little how a man dies. What matters is, how he lives.. Every fool that runs his nose against a bullet is a hero nowadays, because he dies for his country. Why dont he live for it to some purpose?

B. B. No, please, Paddy: dont be hard on the poor lad. Not now, not now. After all, was he so bad? He had only two failings, money and women. Well, let us be honest. Tell the truth, Paddy. Dont be hypocritical, Ridgeon. Throw off the mask, Walpole. Are these two matters so well arranged at present that a disregard of the usual arrangements indicates real depravity?

WALPOLE. I dont mind his disregarding the usual arrangements. Confound the usual arrangements! To a man of science theyre beneath contempt both as to money and women. What I mind is his disregarding everything except his own pocket and his own fancy. He didnt disregard the usual arrangements when they paid him. Did he give us his pictures for nothing? Do you suppose he'd have hesitated to blackmail me if I'd compromised myself with his wife? Not he.

SIR PATRICK. Dont waste your time wrangling over him. A blackguard's a blackguard; an honest man's an honest man; and neither of them will ever be at a loss for a religion or a morality to prove that their ways are the right ways. It's the same with nations, the same with professions, the same all the world over and always will be.

B. B. Ah, well, perhaps, perhaps, perhaps. Still, de mortuis nil nisi bonum. He died extremely well, remarkably well. He has set us an example: let us endeavor to follow it rather than harp on the weaknesses that have perished with him. I think it is Shakespear who says that the good that most men do lives after them: the evil lies interred with their

bones. Yes: interred with their bones. Believe me, Paddy, we are all mortal. It is the common lot, Ridgeon. Say what you will, Walpole, Nature's debt must be paid. If tis not today, twill be tomorrow.

To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow
After life's fitful fever they sleep well
And like this insubstantial bourne from which
No traveller returns
Leave not a wrack behind.

Walpole is about to speak, but B. B., suddenly and vehemently proceeding, extinguishes him.

Out, out, brief candle:
For nothing canst thou to damnation add;
The readiness is all.

WALPOLE [*gently; for B. B.'s feeling, absurdly expressed as it is, is too sincere and humane to be ridiculed*] Yes, B. B. Death makes people go on like that: I don't know why it should; but it does. By the way, what are we going to do? Ought we to clear out; or had we better wait and see whether Mrs Dubedat will come back?

SIR PATRICK. I think we'd better go. We can tell the charwoman what to do.

They take their hats and go to the door.

MRS DUBEDAT [*coming from the inner room wonderfully and beautifully dressed, and radiant, carrying a great piece of purple silk, handsomely embroidered, over her arm*] I'm so sorry to have kept you waiting.

SIR PATRICK	[*amazed, all*	Dont mention it, madam.
B. B.	*together in*	Not at all, not at all.
RIDGEON	*a confused*	By no means.
WALPOLE	*murmur*]	It doesnt matter in the least.

MRS DUBEDAT [*coming to them*] I felt that I must shake hands with his friends once before we part today. We have shared together a great privilege and a great happiness. I dont think we can ever think of ourselves as ordinary people again. We have had a wonderful experience; and that gives

us a common faith, a common ideal, that nobody else can quite have. Life will always be beautiful to us: death will always be beautiful to us. May we shake hands on that?

SIR PATRICK [*shaking hands*] Remember: all letters had better be left to your solicitor. Let him open everything and settle everything. Thats the law, you know.

MRS DUBEDAT. Oh, thank you: I didnt know. [*Sir Patrick goes*].

WALPOLE. Goodbye. I blame myself: I should have insisted on operating. [*He goes*].

B. B. I will send the proper people: they will know what to do: you shall have no trouble. Goodbye, my dear lady. [*He goes*].

RIDGEON. Goodbye. [*He offers his hand*].

MRS DUBEDAT [*drawing back with gentle majesty*] I said his friends, Sir Colenso. [*He bows and goes*].

She unfolds the great piece of silk, and goes into the recess to cover her dead.

ACT V

One of the smaller Bond Street Picture Galleries. The entrance is from a picture shop. Nearly in the middle of the gallery there is a writing-table, at which the Secretary fashionably dressed, sits with his back to the entrance, correcting catalogue proofs. Some copies of a new book are on the desk, also the Secretary's shining hat and a couple of magnifying glasses. At the side, on his left, a little behind him, is a small door marked PRIVATE. *Near the same side is a cushioned bench parallel to the walls, which are covered with Dubedat's works. Two screens, also covered with drawings, stand near the corners right and left of the entrance.*

Jennifer, beautifully dressed and apparently very happy and prosperous, comes into the gallery through the private door.

JENNIFER. Have the catalogues come yet, Mr Danby?

THE SECRETARY. Not yet.

JENNIFER. What a shame! It's a quarter past: the private view will begin in less than half an hour.

THE SECRETARY. I think I'd better run over to the printers to hurry them up.

JENNIFER. Oh, if you would be so good, Mr Danby. I'll take your place while youre away.

THE SECRETARY. If anyone should come before the time dont take any notice. The commissionaire wont let anyone through unless he knows him. We have a few people who like to come before the crowd—people who really buy; and of course we're glad to see them. Have you seen the notices in Brush and Crayon and in The Easel?

JENNIFER [*indignantly*] Yes: most disgraceful. They write quite patronizingly, as if they were Mr Dubedat's superiors. After all the cigars and sandwiches they had from us on the press day, and all they drank, I really think it is infamous that they should write like that. I hope you have not sent

them tickets for today.

THE SECRETARY. Oh, they wont come again: theres no lunch today. The advance copies of your book have come. [*He indicates the new books*].

JENNIFER [*pouncing on a copy, wildly excited*] Give it to me. Oh! excuse me a moment [*she runs away with it through the private door*].

The Secretary takes a mirror from his drawer and smartens himself before going out. Ridgeon comes in.

RIDGEON. Good morning. May I look round, as usual, before the doors open?

THE SECRETARY. Certainly, Sir Colenso. I'm sorry the catalogues have not come: I'm just going to see about them. Heres my own list, if you dont mind.

RIDGEON. Thanks, Whats this? [*He takes up one of the new books*].

THE SECRETARY. Thats just come in. An advance copy of Mrs Dubedat's Life of her late husband.

RIDGEON [*reading the title*] The Story of a King of Men. By His Wife. [*He looks at the portrait frontispiece*]. Ay: there he is. You knew him here, I suppose.

THE SECRETARY. Oh, we knew him. Better than she did, Sir Colenso, in some ways, perhaps.

RIDGEON. So did I. [*They look significantly at one another*]. I'll take a look round.

The Secretary puts on the shining hat and goes out. Ridgeon begins looking at the pictures. Presently he comes back to the table for a magnifying glass, and scrutinizes a drawing very closely. He sighs; shakes his head, as if constrained to admit the extraordinary fascination and merit of the work; then marks the Secretary's list. Proceeding with his survey, he disappears behind the screen. Jennifer comes back with her book. A look round satisfies her that she is alone. She seats herself at the table and admires the memoir —her first printed book—to her heart's content. Ridgeon re-appears, face to the wall, scrutinizing the drawings. After

using his glass again, he steps back to get a more distant view of one of the larger pictures. She hastily closes the book at the sound; looks round; recognizes him; and stares, petrified. He takes a further step back which brings him nearer to her.

RIDGEON [*shaking his head as before, ejaculates*] Clever brute! [*She flushes as though he had struck her. He turns to put the glass down on the desk, and finds himself face to face with her intent gaze*]. I beg your pardon. I thought I was alone.

JENNIFER [*controlling herself, and speaking steadily and meaningly*] I am glad we have met, Sir Colenso Ridgeon. I met Dr Blenkinsop yesterday. I congratulate you on a wonderful cure.

RIDGEON [*can find no words: makes an embarrassed gesture of assent after a moment's silence, and puts down the glass and the Secretary's list on the table*].

JENNIFER. He looked the picture of health and strength and prosperity. [*She looks for a moment at the walls, contrasting Blenkinsop's fortune with the artist's fate*].

RIDGEON [*in low tones, still embarrassed*] He has been fortunate.

JENNIFER. Very fortunate. His life has been spared.

RIDGEON. I mean that he has been made a Medical Officer of Health. He cured the Chairman of the Borough Council very successfully.

JENNIFER. With your medicines?

RIDGEON. No. I believe it was with a pound of ripe greengages.

JENNIFER [*with deep gravity*] Funny!

RIDGEON. Yes. Life does not cease to be funny when people die any more than it ceases to be serious when people laugh.

JENNIFER. Dr Blenkinsop said one very strange thing to me.

RIDGEON. What was that?

JENNIFER. He said that private practice in medicine ought

to be put down by law. When I asked him why, he said that private doctors were ignorant licensed murderers.

RIDGEON. That is what the public doctor always thinks of the private doctor. Well, Blenkinsop ought to know. He was a private doctor long enough himself. Come! you have talked at me long enough. Talk to me. You have something to reproach me with. There is reproach in your face, in your voice: you are full of it. Out with it.

JENNIFER. It is too late for reproaches now. When I turned and saw you just now, I wondered how you could come here coolly to look at his pictures. You answered the question. To you, he was only a clever brute.

RIDGEON [quivering] Oh, dont. You know I did not know you were here.

JENNIFER [*raising her head a little with a quite gentle impulse of pride*] You think it only mattered because I heard it. As if it could touch me, or touch him! Dont you see that what is really dreadful is that to you living things have no souls.

RIDGEON [*with a sceptical shrug*] The soul is an organ I have not come across in the course of my anatomical work.

JENNIFER. You know you would not dare to say such a silly thing as that to anybody but a woman whose mind you despise. If you dissected me you could not find my conscience. Do you think I have got none?

RIDGEON. I have met people who had none.

JENNIFER. Clever brutes? Do you know, doctor, that some of the dearest and most faithful friends I ever had were only brutes! You would have vivisected them. The dearest and greatest of all my friends had a sort of beauty and affectionateness that only animals have. I hope you may never feel what I felt when I had to put him into the hands of men who defend the torture of animals because they are only brutes.

RIDGEON. Well, did you find us so very cruel, after all? They tell me that though you have dropped me, you stay

for weeks with the Bloomfield Boningtons and the Walpoles. I think it must be true, because they never mention you to me now.

JENNIFER. The animals in Sir Ralph's house are like spoiled children. When Mr Walpole had to take a splinter out of the mastiff's paw, I had to hold the poor dog myself; and Mr Walpole had to turn Sir Ralph out of the room. And Mrs Walpole has to tell the gardener not to kill wasps when Mr Walpole is looking. But there are doctors who are naturally cruel; and there are others who get used to cruelty and are callous about it. They blind themselves to the souls of animals; and that blinds them to the souls of men and women. You made a dreadful mistake about Louis; but you would not have made it if you had not trained yourself to make the same mistake about dogs. You saw nothing in them but dumb brutes; and so you could see nothing in him but a clever brute.

RIDGEON [*with sudden resolution*] I made no mistake whatever about him.

JENNIFER. Oh, doctor!

RIDGEON [*obstinately*] I made no mistake whatever about him.

JENNIFER. Have you forgotten that he died?

RIDGEON [*with a sweep of his hand towards the pictures*] He is not dead. He is there. [*Taking up the book*] And there.

JENNIFER [*springing up with blazing eyes*] Put that down. How dare you touch it?

Ridgeon, amazed at the fierceness of the outburst, puts it down with a deprecatory shrug. She takes it up and looks at it as if he had profaned a relic.

RIDGEON. I am very sorry. I see I had better go.

JENNIFER [*putting the book down*] I beg your pardon. I—I forgot myself. But it is not yet—it is a private copy.

RIDGEON. But for me it would have been a very different book.

JENNIFER. But for you it would have been a longer one.

RIDGEON. You know then that I killed him?

JENNIFER [*suddenly moved and softened*] Oh, doctor, if you acknowledge that—if you have confessed it to yourself—if you realize what you have done, then there is forgiveness. I trusted in your strength instinctively at first; then I thought I had mistaken callousness for strength. Can you blame me? But if it was really strength—if it was only such a mistake as we all make sometimes—it will make me so happy to be friends with you again.

RIDGEON. I tell you I made no mistake. I cured Blenkinsop: was there any mistake there?

JENNIFER. He recovered. Oh, dont be foolishly proud, doctor. Confess to a failure, and save our friendship. Remember, Sir Ralph gave Louis your medicine; and it made him worse.

RIDGEON. I cant be your friend on false pretences. Something has got me by the throat: the truth must come out. I used that medicine myself on Blenkinsop. It did not make him worse. It is a dangerous medicine: it cured Blenkinsop: it killed Louis Dubedat. When I handle it, it cures. When another man handles it, it kills—sometimes.

JENNIFER [*naïvely: not yet taking it all in*] Then why did you let Sir Ralph give it to Louis?

RIDGEON. I'm going to tell you. I did it because I was in love with you.

JENNIFER [*innocently surprised*] In lo—You! an elderly man!

RIDGEON [*thunderstruck, raising his fists to heaven*] Dubedat: thou art avenged! [*He drops his hands and collapses on the bench*]. I never thought of that. I suppose I appear to you a ridiculous old fogey.

JENNIFER. But surely—I did not mean to offend you, indeed—but you must be at least twenty years older than I am.

RIDGEON. Oh, quite. More, perhaps. In twenty years you will understand how little difference that makes.

JENNIFER. But even so, how could you think that I—his wife—could ever think of you—

RIDGEON [*stopping her with a nervous waving of his fingers*] Yes, yes, yes, yes: I quite understand: you neednt rub it in.

JENNIFER. But—oh, it is only dawning on me now—I was so surprised at first—do you dare to tell me that it was to gratify a miserable jealousy that you deliberately—oh! oh! you murdered him.

RIDGEON. I think I did. It really comes to that.

Thou shalt not kill, but needst not strive
Officiously to keep alive.

I suppose—yes: I killed him.

JENNIFER. And you tell me that! to my face! callously! You are not afraid!

RIDGEON. I am a doctor: I have nothing to fear. It is not an indictable offence to call in B. B. Perhaps it ought to be; but it isnt.

JENNIFER. I did not mean that. I meant afraid of my taking the law into my own hands, and killing you.

RIDGEON. I am so hopelessly idiotic about you that I should not mind it a bit. You would always remember me if you did that.

JENNIFER. I shall remember you always as a little man who tried to kill a great one.

RIDGEON. Pardon me. I succeeded.

JENNIFER [*with quiet conviction*] No. Doctors think they hold the keys of life and death; but it is not their will that is fulfilled. I dont believe you made any difference at all.

RIDGEON. Perhaps not. But I intended to.

JENNIFER [*looking at him amazedly: not without pity*] And you tried to destroy that wonderful and beautiful life merely because you grudged him a woman whom you could never have expected to care for you!

RIDGEON. Who kissed my hands. Who believed in me. Who told me her friendship lasted until death.

JENNIFER. And whom you were betraying.

RIDGEON. No. Whom I was saving.

JENNIFER [*gently*] Pray, doctor, from what?

RIDGEON. From making a terrible discovery. From having your life laid waste.

JENNIFER. How?

RIDGEON. No matter. I have saved you. I have been the best friend you ever had. You are happy. You are well. His works are an imperishable joy and pride for you.

JENNIFER. And you think that is your doing. Oh doctor, doctor! Sir Patrick is right: you do think you are a little god. How can you be so silly? You did not paint those pictures which are my imperishable joy and pride: you did not speak the words that will always be heavenly music in my ears. I listen to them now whenever I am tired or sad. That is why I am always happy.

RIDGEON. Yes, now that he is dead. Were you always happy when he was alive?

JENNIFER [*wounded*] Oh, you are cruel, cruel. When he was alive I did not know the greatness of my blessing. I worried meanly about little things. I was unkind to him. I was unworthy of him.

RIDGEON [*laughing bitterly*] Ha!

JENNIFER. Don't insult me: dont blaspheme. [*She snatches up the book and presses it to her heart in a paroxysm of remorse, exclaiming*] Oh, my King of Men!

RIDGEON. King of Men! Oh, this is too monstrous, too grotesque. We cruel doctors have kept the secret from you faithfully; but it is like all secrets: it will not keep itself. The buried truth germinates and breaks through to the light.

JENNIFER. What truth?

RIDGEON. What truth! Why, that Louis Dubedat, King of Men, was the most entire and perfect scoundrel, the most miraculously mean rascal, the most callously selfish blackguard that ever made a wife miserable.

JENNIFER [*unshaken: calm and lovely*] He made his wife

the happiest woman in the world, doctor.

RIDGEON. No: by all thats true on earth, he made his widow the happiest woman in the world; but it was I who made her a widow. And her happiness is my justification and my reward. Now you know what I did and what I thought of him. Be as angry with me as you like: at least you know me as I really am. If you ever come to care for an elderly man, you will know what you are caring for.

JENNIFER [*kind and quiet*] I am not angry with you any more, Sir Colenso. I knew quite well that you did not like Louis; but it is not your fault: you dont understand: that is all. You never could have believed in him. It is just like your not believing in my religion: it is a sort of sixth sense that you have not got. And [*with a gentle reassuring movement towards him*] dont think that you have shocked me so dreadfully. I know quite well what you mean by his selfishness. He sacrificed everything for his art. In a certain sense he had even to sacrifice everybody—

RIDGEON. Everybody except himself. By keeping that back he lost the right to sacrifice you, and gave me the right to sacrifice him. Which I did.

JENNIFER [*shaking her head, pitying his error*] He was one of the men who know what women know: that self-sacrifice is vain and cowardly.

RIDGEON. Yes, when the sacrifice is rejected and thrown away. Not when it becomes the food of godhead.

JENNIFER. I dont understand that. And I cant argue with you: you are clever enough to puzzle me, but not to shake me. You are so utterly, so wildly wrong; so incapable of appreciating Louis—

RIDGEON. Oh! [*taking up the Secretary's list*] I have marked five pictures as sold to me.

JENNIFER. They will not be sold to you. Louis' creditors insisted on selling them; but this is my birthday; and they were all bought in for me this morning by my husband.

RIDGEON. By whom?!!!

JENNIFER. By my husband.

RIDGEON [*gabbling and stuttering*] What husband? Whose husband? Which husband? Whom? how? what? Do you mean to say that you have married again?

JENNIFER. Do you forget that Louis disliked widows, and that people who have married happily once always marry again?

RIDGEON. Then I have committed a purely disinterested murder!

The Secretary returns with a pile of catalogues.

THE SECRETARY. Just got the first batch of catalogues in time. The doors are open.

JENNIFER [*to Ridgeon, politely*] So glad you like the pictures, Sir Colenso. Good morning.

RIDGEON. Good morning. [*He goes towards the door; hesitates; turns to say something more; gives it up as a bad job; and goes*].

21
EXPLANATORY NOTES

(I) NOTES ON THE PREFACE

murderous absurdity—Such a bad state that it is more likely to cause murders than give relief.

mutilation—cutting off a part of someone's body.

mutilator—surgeon.

scandalized voices—statements of persons who have been shocked by Shaw's views.

pretty ones—young children.

the leg may mortify—the wound in the leg may become septic and generate poisons which may ultimately kill the patient.

uvula—a small piece of fleshy matter hanging from the back of the roof of the mouth.

a fool's paradise—unthinking happiness that is not likely to last.

trumpery—showy but worthless.

extirpates—cuts out.

rule-of-thumb conscience—a feeling that one is doing the right thing because one is doing what everybody else is doing.

pirate—sea-robber.

Moliere—French writer of comedies. He lived from 1622 to 1673.

credulous ignoramus—an ignorant person who easily believes what he is told.

The Peculiar People—In the Bible the Jews are spoken of as God's own people or the peculiar people. Shaw here refers to a sect of Christians who believed that all diseases could be cured by prayer and faith. They do not call doctors.

Epistle—letters which were written by the Apostles of the Christian Church and have been included in the Bible.

divine omniscience—knowledge of everything which God alone has.

On the Bench—among judges. Shaw implies that most of the judges do not know the law.

Blasphemy Laws—British laws according to which the condemnation of Christian religion is a criminal offence.

scepticism—doubt or disbelief.

with impunity—without being punished.

perjury—making a false statement in a court of law after taking an oath to speak the truth.

medical infallibility—the belief that doctors cannot commit a mistake.

in the dock—place where an accused stands in a court.

postulate—basic principle taken as a basis for reasoning.

the elixir of life—the alchemists wanted to manufacture a medicine which would prolong life indefinitely.

pathogenic bacilli—germs which are capable of causing disease.

decimate—destroy a large number.

disastrous noodles—fools who are likely to cause disaster.

Sir William Gull—British physician (1816-1890).

medical shop—gosssip about the actions of other doctors.

sacerdotal—priestly.

the strangling of......priests—According to A.C. Ward the will of Jean Messelier (an 18th century revolutionist) contained the words : "I should like to see the last king strangled with the guts of the last priest". Jean Messelier was against royalty as well as priesthood.

Compulsory vaccination—Under British law parents had to get their infants vaccinated compulsorily to save them from small-pox.

Baptism—A person is admitted to Christianity by sprinkling holy water on him. This is a symbolic way of washing away his sins.

hypochondria—abnormal anxiety about one's health.

An idler's pension—an allowance paid to unemployed persons.

conservative surgeons—surgeons who avoid operations as far as possible.

Anatory infatuations—love affairs.

table-rappers and slate-writers—spiritualists use these methods to communicate with the spirits of the dead.

Barnaby Rudge—a novel by Charles Dickens (1812-1870).

Slattern—a woman who is careless and untidy in her work.

Obsolescence—process of becoming obsolete or out-of-date.

atrophy—failure of a part of the body. Here it means metaphorically the failure of conscience.

equipage—(or autopage). words coined by Shaw mean "car and chauffeur".

malade imaginaire—persons who imagine that they are ill. *Le Malade Imaginaire* is a comedy by Moliere.

Nelson—a great British Admiral who defeated the French in a great naval battle at Trafalagar (1805). He was unfaithful to his wife and was in love with Lady Hamilton.

Andrea Del Sarto—a great Florentine painter (1486-1531). He was a great artist but he was not very honest. He misappropriated the money which the King of France had given to him to buy pictures for him.

organ-grinder—a person who plays on a barrel organ in the streets for a living.

Seven Dials—the district of London, so called because seven streets meet there.

Scrivener—clerk or draftsman.

herbalists—those who use herbs as medicines.

Christian Science—a system which believes that diseases can be cured by faith and prayer.

adjure—ask earnestly or solemnly.

tubercle bacillus—the germ that causes tuberculosis.

Eden—the garden where Adam and Eve lived in perfect bliss.

Florence Nightingale—She was born in a noble family but decided to become a nurse. During the Crimean War she went to the Military Hospital in Crimea with a staff of 38 nurses. In four months the deathr-ate came down from 42% to 2%. She made nursing an honourable profession for women. She was loved and admired by the wounded soldiers who called her "The Lady with the Lamp".

hydrophobia—a disease caused by the bite of a mad dog or a mad animal of that species.

prophylaxis—preventive treatment of disease.

Cowpox—a disease of cows. The vaccine for smallpox is made from the virus collected from cows suffering from this disease.

Lourdes—famous for its miraculous cures.

Davos—a place in Switzerland.

champagne—a costly wine made in France.

Hahnemann—a German physician who founded homoeopathy.

vivisection—killing an animal and cutting open its body to study its organs and the effects of diseases and medicines on its various parts.

buccaneer—sea-robber.

Dr. Johnson—Samuel Johnson (1709-1784); a great English prose writer of the 18th century. He was the first English lexicographer–compiler of a dictionary.

Ruskin—John Ruskin (1819-1900); a great English writer, critic and reformer. His book, *Unto This Last*, produced a remarkable effect on Mahatma Gandhi and other great reformers.

Mark Twain—pen name of Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1853-1910); a great American novelist and humorist.

Peter the Great—Peter I (1672-1725); Czar of Russia.

Christening an iron-clad—an "iron-clad" is a warship which is covered with iron plates. When a warship is launched in the West a bottle of champagne is broken against its bows.

Macaulay—Thomas Babington Macaulay (1809-1859); English historian, essayist and poet. As a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council he was responsible for introducing the Western system of education in India.

Cupping—operation of drawing blood through the skin by creating a partial vacuum over the area by means of a glass cup.

firing—sealing of wounds by applying a hot iron to them.

the serpent—According to the Bible, Satan went to the Garden of Eden in the form of a serpent and tempted Eve to eat the forbidden apple of knowledge. Eve ate that fruit and fell.

Adam also ate that apple and fell. They became the parents of the entire human race.

Gray—Thomas Gray (1716-1771), English poet. His most famous poem is his *Elegy on a Country Churchyard.* The quotation given by Shaw is taken from *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College.*

Life Force—This is the vital energy created by Nature in men and women urging them to evolve into the superman.

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing—An adaptation of Pope's line : "A little learning is a dangerous thing".

social taboo—social prohibition or restriction.

Chinaman who burnt down his house—Charles Lamb, in his essay entitled 'A Dissertation on Roast Pig', has described a Chinaman who used to burn his house so that the pigs would get roasted and he would be able to eat roasted pigs.

Nero—He was a Roman Emperor who played on the fiddle while Rome was burning.

The old Hebrew legend—It is related in the Bible that God was very sorry to see the wickedness of man so he sent a flood which destroyed everything except one pair of each species. Naoh took a boat and collected these pairs and these peopled the earth after the flood had subsided.

The Rontgen rays—X-Rays are named Rontgen rays after their inventor.

Protean—a thing which takes various shapes and forms. The word is derived from Proteus, the sea-god in classical mythology. Water can take the shape of the vessel in which it is kept. So the Greeks said that the sea-god can take any shape he likes.

At first blush—at first sight.

Quarter days—four days in the year on which rent and other liabilities are due.

sardonically—scornfully.

tarred with the same brush—equally to blame.

Darwin—Darwin (1809-1882) put forward his theory of evolution in his book, *Origin of Species.* According to Darwin man is descended from the single-celled amoeba. A struggle for existence is constantly going on in nature in which the fittest survive and become the parents of the next generation.

voluptuary—a person whose one aim in life is pleasure, a sensualist.

huffy—one who takes offence easily.

routineers—persons who follow a fixed routine.

flagellation—whipping or beating somebody as a duty.

precept of Solomon—The moral instruction of Solomon referred to by Shaw is contained in the Old Testament and runs thus : "He that spareth the rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him correcteth him betimes". "To spare the rod" means "*not* to beat a child".

seals—sea-mammals.

fanciers—persons with special knowledge of animals.

mendacious—untruthful.

ingenious—clever.

sphygmoraph—an instrument which records the condition of the pulse.

groove—fixed routine.

Galsworthy—John Galsworthy (1867-1933) : English novelist and dramatist. Shaw here refers to his play, *Justice*, where Galsworthy shows that 'justice' in modern society is not true justice but only a blind interpretation of laws.

Sade—Count Donation de Sade (1740-1814). He has described various sexual perversions. "Sadism" has come to mean a sexual perversion marked by getting pleasure by inflicting cruelty on other persons of either sex.

Bluebeard—a character in a story by Charles Perrault (1628-1703). Bluebeard marries and kills several women and keeps their dead bodies in a locked room.

Nero—Roman Emperor who played on the fiddle while Rome was burning.

Mr. Smith—an average man.

flaying—taking the skin off an animal.

sable—an animal which is killed because its glossy dark fur is in great demand for making ladies' cloaks.

St. Francis—an Italian saint known as Francis of Assissi. He is known for serving lepers and other outcasts and for his love of brids and animals whom he called "his little brothers".

He spent his time in prayer and in serving the poor. He founded the Franciscan order of monks. He was made a saint two years after his death in 1226.

pulmonary tuberculosis—tuberculosis of the lungs.

guinea pig—a small, fat mammal of the rat family. It is often used for scientific expriments. Metaphorically the term is used for any person or animal used for scientific experiments.

Achilles heel—the weakest point in the argument. Achilles was one of the Greek heroes who went to Troy with the Greek expedition to bring Helen back. When he was young his mother had dipped him in the river Styx to make him invulnerable but the water did not touch the heel. The heel, therefore, remained vulnerable. He was killed in the Trojan War when an arrow struck him on the heel.

puling moralist—weak moralist.

garotte—kill by strangling.

cutthroat's casuistries—wrong reasoning of merciless vivisectionists.

Carotid artery—the two arteries on the two sides of the neck which carry blood from the heart to the head.

jugular vein—the jugular veins carry the blood back from the head to the heart.

Joan of Arc—a French peasant girl who was urged by the inner voices of saints to leave her home and fight for France which was then occupied by the British. She inspired a wonderful national spirit in the French people. She raised the siege of Orleans and led her people to defeat the British in numerous battles. She crowned the Dauphin as King Charles at Rheims. In 1430 Joan was taken prisoner by the Burgundians and sold to the British. She was tried and her judges thought that the voices that she heard, were the voices of the Devil, and see was a witch. She was, therefore, burnt alive as a witch. In 1920 the Roman Catholic Church declared that she was not a witch but a saint. Shaw has written a play on her called *Saint Joan*.

the ramming of the Victoria by the Camperdown—These two warships collided in 1893 and the *Victoria* was sunk within a few minutes.

Jenner—Edward Jenner (1749-1823) ; English physician who introduced vaccination in England.

Catherine II—Catherine the Great. She reigned in Russia from 1762 to 1796. She was an enlightened despot.

prophylactic—a substance or treatment which serves to protect one from a disease.

laudatores tempori acti—persons who think that things were better in the past than they are now.

white magic—the magic of science as contrasted with black magic which is inspired by the Devil.

pew—a row of fixed seats in a church.

pestilence—an epidemic.

the black death—the plague.

endemic—a disease regularly present in a country or area or among a particular class of people.

docking—cutting the tail.

mummy—a dead body preserved by being embalmed in the Egyptians.

The Pickwich Papers—a humorous novel written by Charles Dickens.

Cold tubs—cold baths.

The Court Theatre—Shaw's plays were staged in this theatre from 1904 to 1907.

venal—capable of being obtained for money.

vital statistics—Figures dealing with birth-rate, death-rate etc.

divinatory—superhuman.

crack consultant—a really good doctor whom one can consult in complicated cases.

waterloo—a village in Belgium where Napoleon was finally defeated by the Allies under the Duke of Wellington.

frowsting—staying in an old-fashioned, stuffy, foul-smelling room.

Our Lady—Virgin Mary.

Bethlehem—Jesus Christ was born at Bethlehem and kept in a cow's manger.

the whirligig of time—changes of fortune. Reference to Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, Act V, Sc. I.

Arndt's Law—the observation of Rudolf Gottfried Arndt (1831-1900) that the same medicine in small dose would cure a patient but in large doses it would kill him.

phlogiston—The ancient scientists believed that phlogiston was a necessary constituent of all burning bodies. But this idea has proved to be wrong.

Will O' the Wisp—a flickering light often seen in marshy places. It misleads people and they lose their life in the marsh. It has, therefore, come to mean "any misleading object".

Elixir of life and **Philsopher's Stone**—These were imaginary things which the alchemists were trying to produce, the *Elixir of Life* to prolong human life and the *Philosopher's Stone* to turn baser metals into gold.

the days of Paracelsus—the early 16th century.

concupiscence—sexual desire.

filch—steal things of small value.

illness is a misdemeanor—disease is an offence. This view was expressed by Samuel Butler in his Utopia entitled *Erewhon* (which means "nowhere").

inquest—an inquiry into the cause of a person's death.

Municipalize Harley Street—Bring the medical profession under public control.

Remember that I too an mortal—The sign board of the doctor should make it clear that he is not a god and cannot work miracles. He is as liable to make mistakes as any other human being.

(II) NOTES ON THE PLAY

Dilemma—a perplexing situation in which one has to choose between two difficult alternatives. In The *Doctor's Dilemma* Ridgeon is faced with a dilemma : Should he save the life of Dubedat who is a talented artist but an immoral man or the life of Blenkinsop who is a good man but has no talent ?

devils—does various type of miscellaneous work (for which he gets no credit) .

affiliation—association.

credulous—one who believes others easily.

gypsy—a member of a race of people who are always wandering about.

detergent—a cleansing agent.

toddles about—moves about.

spying out—looking for (dust).

indulgences—favours.

Cleopatra—Queen of Egypt. She lived from 69-30 B. C. She was loved by Julius Caesar and Mark Antony.

Fair Rosamund—Rosamund Clifford was the mistress of Henry II, a king of England in the 12th Century.

beetween Cavendish Square and Marylebone Road—this area is full of doctors' clinics. Harley Street is famous for medical specialists.

console—a kind of narrow table attached to a wall.

Sphinx Claws—the lower portions of the legs of the table resemble the claws of the Sphinx. The Sphinx is a stone statue in Egypt having a lion's body and the head and breasts of a woman.

pier-glass—a large, long mirror in which one can see the whole of oneself.

rep—textile fabric used for curtains etc.

coeval—of the same time.

Birthday honours—the honours conferred on British citizens on the birthday of the reigning king or queen.

fudge—useless talk; humbug.

Maltese fever—a type of fever common in the Mediterranean region. It afflicts a patient for a long time.

flaxen—of the colour of straw.

knighthood—a knighthood is an honour conferred on person in Great Britain for some great achievement. The person concerned can write "Sir" before his name. Thus Ridgeon became "Sir Colenso Ridgeon" for his discovery of a cure for tuberculosis.

pigeon-breasted—a deformity of the chest.

University College School—the medical school of the University.

Loony—Dr. Schutzmacher was nick-named "Loony" because he was an eccentric person. The word "Loony" is derived from "lunatic".

rap—money.

g. p.—general practioner.

infra dig—below one's dignity.

St. Anne's—the name of the hospital where Ridgeon worked.

Not yet quite at the end of his tether—not yet at the end of his working capacity. He is still working as a doctor.

acclimitized—adjusted (to the ways of the English people).

gruff—rough.

grunts—sounds like those of a pig.

Is your hat too small for you ?—Have you become so proud or swollen-headed that your hat has become too small for your head ?

Blarney—flattery.

the airs of age—the idea that old persons are wiser than young men.

Browning's play—*A Soul's Tragedy* written by Robert Browning, a great poet of the Victorian age.

Devilment—mischief.

Gammon—utter nonsense.

siege—He is surrounded by T. B. patients who want to be cured.

unnerves me—upsets me.

voices—sounds coming from saints and other supernatural agencies.

Chloroform surgeons—surgeons who perform operations after making the patient unconscious.

exasperated—irritated.

Console—a bracket in a wall to support a shelf.

snip off—cut off.

uvulva—a small piece of fleshy matter hanging from the back of the roof of the mouth.

extirpated—removed.

bragging—boasting.

unhesitating—confident of himself.

salient—pointed.

beeswaxed—smooth.

Spats—cloth cover worn over the upper part of a shoe and round the ankle.

A paper—an article; a description.

saw—a surgical instrument for cutting.

jimmy—jemmy, a crowbar, specially used by burglars for forcing open doors, windows etc.

complexion—apperance, specially of the face.

ptomaines—substances found in decaying matter.

Whited sepulchre—a grave which is painted white from outside. Here Mrs. Foljambe looked healthy from outside but had decayed matter inside her body.

sponges—used to absorb blood.

knuckle—bone at a finger-joint.

akimbo—with hands on hips and elbows out.

Drat him—damn him.

pikestaff—a long wooden shaft with a spearhead, formerly used by soldiers.

plain as a pikestaff—absolutely plain and simple.

His waistcoat has filled out—he has put on weight and has now become fatter than before.

Perpetual anthem—continuous song.

Christian scientist—a doctor who believes in healing patients by prayer.

a colossal humbug—a doctor who knows nothing about medicine.

pass muster—come up to the required standard.

egregious—impressive ; big.

Welcome—Sir Ralph is himself a knight and so he welcomes the new Knight (Ridgeon) to that order.

Absent-minded beggar—This is the title of a poem by Kipling on British soldiers. B. B. applies this title to Walpole because he is absent-minded when performing operations. B. B. sent an opera singer to him for a throat operaton and Walpole removed her nuciform sac.

distinguished family—the family of the King. B. B. was the physician of the royal family.

The proof the pudding lies in the eating—a thing can be truly judged by the effect it produces.

system—the human body.

pathogenic germs—extremely small germs which can only be seen through a microscope.

translucent bodies—These are various chemicals with which the germs can be dyed, so that they can be seen through the microscope.

Cochineal etc—These are various chemicals with which the germs can be dyed so that they can be seen through a microscope.

conceive—think of.

Loeffler—He, along with Klebs, discovered the diphtheria germ.

pseudo-bacillus—an imitation of the disease germ.

profound—deep.

faddists—ignorant people who pick up an idea and make it a fad or a fashion.

A little···spring—a quotation from *Essay on Criticism* by Alexander Pope. Pope meant that ignorance is better than superficial knowledge.

Pierian Spring—a spring in Pieria where the people worshiped the Muses who, according to classical mythology, were the goddesses of the fine arts.

bleeding—the ancient doctors believed that a disease could be cured by making some blood flow out of the patient's body.

cupping—an operation of drawing the blood through the skin by creating a partial vaccuum over the area by means of a glass cup.

veterans—stalwarts, leaders.

flabby—with loose muscles.

diffidence—lack of confidence.

the great guns—all the leaders of the medical profession.

correlate—connect.

itis—any other similar disease.

St. Moritz—in Switzerland.

a slice of the moon—some impossible treatment.

presumptuous—excessively bold.

bow-wow—a sound like a dog's bark.

repress—suppress.

Tetanus—a terrible disease caused by germs which enter the body through wounds. The disease is often fatal.

a beadle—a minor officer in the church.

Lockjaw—tetanus sometimes causes the jaws to become locked.

paroxysms—violent fits.

St. Vitus's dance—a disease of the nerves in which the muscles get pulled in different directions.

lift—promotion or fame.

beams—smiles cheerfully.

The knife is the real remedy—The patients can only be cured by operating upon them and removing the nuciform sac.

London Season—early summer when people get tired due to social activities.

toddling—(colloquial) going.

precipitately—in a sudden hurry.

laity—common people.

draught—strong current of air.

catamaran—troublesome woman.

I learnt you—I taught you.

flustered—confused.

sluts—immoral women.

beyond all demur—undoubtedly.

susceptible—easily moved.

Pantaloon—a foolish character round whom a clown plays tricks.

Wig—a covering for the head of false hair.

raft—small boat.

quack—one who is not qualified but pretends to be a doctor.

my discovery is not patented—I have not taken permission from the Govt. to have exclusive use of my discovery; anyone can make use of my discovery.

Cornish—belonging to Cornwall (a county in England). There Jennifer was a common name.

Star and Garter Richmond—The Star and Garter was a famous hotel at Richmond overlooking the Thames.

Catching—infectious.

deary—dear one ; darling.

Act II

trajectory—curved path.

measured clucking—rhythmic sound of the oars in boats plying on the Thames.

basks—bathes ; is enjoying himself fully in the moon light.

blissfully—happily.

moonbeams—moonlight.

The laws of Tyre and Sidon—laws which cannot be changed and have to be obeyed. Sidon was the capital of ancient Phoenicia and Tyre was a seaport in that land. B. B. means that Sir Patrick's orders have to be obeyed.

stripling—a boy growing into manhood.

turquoise—a bluish precious stone.

Jinny Gwinny—Louis's affectionate diminutives of Jennifer and Guinevere.

Danube—a river in Europe.

a nailer—an expert.

pastel—coloured chalks or crayons.

ruminating—thinking quietly.

Half a milkman—a milkman was involved in an accident and a prescription of Dr. Blenkinsop was found in his pocket: So the police wanted the doctor's help in identifying him.

appalling—horrible.

bounder—ill-mannered fellow.

A cynic—one who feels that everyone in the world is selfish. He is critical of people who talk of noble ideals but behave in a selfish way.

bang plump out—without any hesitation ; frankly.

when your ship comes home—when you are financially better off.

balurtrade—row of upright supports that hold a railing round a balcony, terrace, flat roof etc.

dress clothes—formal dinner dress for men.

tramp the rest—walk for the rest of the distance.

Philistine—a person who is lacking in culture and the higher values of life. He has narrow views and low tastes.

Twaddle—nonsense.

the Chosen people—a title applied to the Jews.

Gentiles—persons who are not of the Jewish race.

Can't improve on Nature—Dubedat's actual conduct is more surprising than anything one can imagine.

Cad—a person capable of acting in a dishonourable manner.

furtively—secretly.

accost—to go up to and speak to someone.

marriage lines—marriage certificate.

bigamy—a man having two wives.

spunge on—borrow.

my right lung is touched—I have T.B. of the right lung.

hold the scales—judge rightly.

claptrap—absurd ideas which are presented only to attract attention or win applause.

sceptical—one having doubts about a thing (Here Ridgeon is not sure about Blenkinsop's absolute goodness).

brass bands—bands of musicians.

Act III

scrawlings—rough sketches and scribblings.

memoranda—rough notes.

studio throne—It is called a throne because the artist's model sits on it.

easel—a wooden frame to support a picture.

dilapidated—old and broken.

lay figure—a wooden frame in the shape of a human body.

odds and ends—various miscellaneous things.

smudged—made dirty with paint.

mane—silly; dull.

smock—a loose garment like an over-all.

prefunctorily—without any care or interest. He makes a promise but has no intention of keeping it.

sordid—mean.

one-man show—an exhibition of paintings done by one painter.

palette—a board (with a hole for the thumb) on which an artist mixes his colours.

tussore silk—coarse silk. This shows their poverty.

a feather in their cap—a thing of which they will be proud.

pig along—manage to live in a poor way.

but while......starves—The horse cannot live only on the hope that in course of time the grass will grow.

premiums—money to be paid for insurance.

to sound—to make a medical check-up.

your bit—your profit.

dividends—money paid periodically to the shareholders of a company.

like a shot—at once.

blackmail—force someone to pay money because he does not want some secret to be revealed to others.

conclave—a secret meeting of cardinals to elect a Pope.

destroying the dignity of the conclave—The lay figure was dressed like a cardinal but his dignity is spoiled when B. B's hat is put on his head.

hitches up—pulls.

pawn ticket—a receipt of a pawn-broker for goods pledged with him for a loan taken from him.

ingenuously—frankly; innocently.

Down with the dust—pay the money at once.

I havnt a rap—I do not have any money at all.

dazzling cheek—very great impudence.

collectors—persons who collect works of art.

Christie's—a famous shop in London selling works of art, antiques etc.

Still room maid—maid-servant looking after stores.

lassie—lass ; girl.

cleaned out—absolutely without money.

cocksure—absolutely certain.

a liner—a big passenger ship.

daisy—fine person (said ironically).

solicitor—lawyer.

the last straw—the limit beyond which he could not stand any more nonsense from Dubedat.

to harp on—to keep talking about.

dastard—a coward who is brutal when there is no risk to himself.

intimidation—the act of frightening others in order to force them to do something.

parson—Christian priest.

scruff of the neck—the back of the neck.

snort—to force air violently through the nose to show impatience or contempt.

Bernard Shaw—Shaw makes Louis say that he is Shaw's follower. Shaw did not believe in conventional morality. On the stage this will create a very humorous effect.

Superman—Shaw's superman would be a superior being who would not be guided by conventional morality and the laws of marriage.

effusive—to show his pleasure.

Methodist—a follower of John Wesley.

Christian scientists--persons who believed that all diseases could be cured by prayer alone.

my hands are full—I cannot take any new patient.

in high dudgeon—greatly & offended.

Brompton Hospital—the name of a hospital where diseases of the chest were treated.

Cant—hypocrisy.

reductio ad absurdum—to reduce it to absurdity.

J. M. Barrie—a playwright (1860-1937).

a crust—a piece of bread.

carbonic acid gas—carbon dioxide which is exhaled by human beings.

President of the Royal Academy—one of the greatest artists of England.

snobs—who think very highly of themselves and despise those who are of lower position.

Jupiter—the king of the gods in classical mythology. This is like saying "By God !"

maam—abbreviation of "madam".

If the mountain............mountain—B. B. means that if the patient will not come to the doctor, the great doctor himself will come to treat him.

laying traps for him—trying to catch him.

wreck—complete ruin.

hazards—risks.

Act IV

Cardinal Death—A lay figure of a cardinal formerly presided at this studio. Now Death seems to preside at this studio where Louis is about to die.

scythe—an instrument with which the crops are cut.

hour-glass—an instrument used for measuring the time before clocks were invented.

sceptre—This is a rod which a king holds in his hand as a symbol of his authority.

globe—a symbol of the universal sovereignty.

galloping consumption—a type of T. B. which kills a patient within a short time.

elate—high-spirited.

pallor—paleness.

monomania—complete attachment to one subject amounting almost to madness. Walpole's mania was the "Nuciform Sac".

Cooked our young friend's goose—killed him.

callous—indifferent to the sufferings of others.

congenital—inborn.

erroneousness—inclination to commit mistakes.

unveracity—untruthfulness.

irresponsive—not responding to the questions.

no public register—no registration of qualified journalists.

blink—to shut and close the eyes quickly.

lancet—a knife used by surgeons.

Baker Street—Where there were many photographers.

langour—weakness of body.

voluptuousness—sensual pleasure.

implacable—relentless, one who cannot be moved at all.

ogles—looks at; makes eyes at.

Dante—A great Italian poet. He lived from 1265 to 1321. His most famous book is *The Divine Comedy*.

transfigured—raised to a higher level.

Woman in the street—common woman.

hell of crape—black dress worn for mourning. Louis did not like this.

undertaker—one who arranges funerals.

The burning bush—The reference is to the Old Testament, Exodus, where God appeared to Moses in a bush. "The Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he saw that the bush was on fire and was not burnt."

Garnet colour—red colour.

Quaintly—in a strange manner.

affectation—unnatural ; mere show.

break loose—separate from his wife.

poor devil—poor fellow.

glee—cheerfulness.

played the game—lived in a straightforward and honest manner.

creed—his faith. These words are taken by Shaw from Wagner, a great German composer of music, who has described the death of a musician.

Michael Angelo—a great Italian painter and sulptor. (1475–1564).

Valasquez—a great Spanish painter. (1599–1660).

Rembrandt—a great Dutch painter. (1606–1669).

For there are no bands in their death—Ref. to the Old Testament, Psalm 72. "For there is no regard to their death : nor is their strength in their stripes". Sir Patrick means that wicked men have no difficulty in dying.

mask—external covering. Show your real self.

depravity—vicious or immoral behaviour.

blackguard—scoundrel.

de mortuis nil nisi bonum—do not speak ill of the dead.

Shakespeare—B. B. mixes up a number of quotations from Julius Caesar and Macbeth and misquotes them.

the good......bones—Mark Antony in *Julius Caesar* says just the opposite. Referring to Caesar he says that generally people forget the good things that a dead man did and remember only his bad points.

interred—buried.

Nature's debt must be paid—we must all die.

the proper people—the people who know what to do in a funeral. They are professionals.

recess—the part of a room where the wall is set back from the main part. The dead body of Louis had been kept there.

Act V

Bond Street—a street in London where most of the art galleries are situated.

Private view—a show only for distinguished invitees.

commissionaire—a door-porter ; door-keeper.

Brush Crayon, The Easel—names of art magazines.

frontispiece—a picture placed opposite the title-page of a book.

petrified—turned to stone ; become motionless due to shock.

mastiff—a large dog.

profaned—shown contempt for some sacred thing.

old fogey—an old man with old-fashioned ideas.

rub it in—emphasize a point.

it is only dawning on me now—I am beginning to understand only now.

Thou......alive—This is a parody of the Ten Commandments by Arthur Clough. This explains Ridgeon's attitude towards

Dubedat. He did not kill him but he made no effort to cure him and keep him alive.

indictable offence—an offence for which one can be tried by jury.

the food of godhead—a sacrifice made at the altar of a god and accepted by him.

gabbling—talking quickly and indistinctly.

stuttering—stammering.

disinterested murder—murder which did not benefit him in any way.

22
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. I. "*The Doctor's Dilemma* **was written on the basis of certain real experiences in the life of George Bernard Shaw."** Discuss.

Ans : The main ideas embodied in this play are based on some real experiences in Shaw's life and its characters are based on some real persons whom Shaw knew well.

The main ideas of a dilemma experienced by a doctor whether he should treat this patient or that arose out of the following incident.

Shaw went to visit a famous doctor, Sir Almroth Wright, at St. Mary's Hospital. Sir Almroth was treating tuberculosis patients in this hospital with his new Opsonion treatment. The hospital was overcrowded. An assistant came in to report that a new tuberculosis patient wanted to be admitted for Sir Almroth's Opsonin treatment. Sir Almroth did not say "No." He asked, "Is he worth it ?".

This gave Shaw an idea that it was for the doctor to decide the ethical question whether the patient was morally good enough to be treated and saved.

In *The Doctor's Dilemma* Ridgeon has to decide whether he should treat Louis Dubedat who is a great artist but an immoral man or Blenkinsop who has no talent but is a good man.

Shaw also took the main idea of Ridgeon's great discovery (for which he won a knighthood) from the discoveries of Sir Almroth Wright.

The principle of vaccination is very simple. In the human body the white blood corpuscles or Phagocytes fight against the disease germs and kill the bacteria. If a serum made out of the weak germs of the same disease is injected in the patient, his Phagocytes start fighting against the germs and in the process they become alert and strong and when a big attack of the bacteria comes the Phagocytes devour those germs and the patient is saved. But the doctors were surprised to find that the same

inoculation cured some patients while it killed some others. Sir Almroth investigated the reason for this. He found that the Phagocytes eat the bacteria only when they are made appetising by being mixed with a sauce called Opsonin. This Opsonin is produced by the human body but its production is not uniform. Sometimes more of it is produced, sometimes less. These phases are called the positive and negative phases. If the inoculation is given in the positive phase the patient is saved. If it is given in the negative phase the Phagocytes do not eat up the germs and the disease triumphs.

This discovery of Sir Almroth Wright is attributed in this play to Dr. Ridgeon. He tells Sir Patrick, "Send a drop of the patient's blood to the laboratory at St. Anne's and in fifteen minutes I will give you his Opsonin index in figures. If the figure is one, inoculate and cure; if it is under point eight, inoculate and kill. That is my discovery".

Shaw's biographers have told us that the characters in *The Doctor's Dilemma* are taken from persons whom Shaw knew in real life. Sir Almroth Wright was the original for Sir Colenso Ridgeon. The portraits of other doctors are also based on the doctors and surgeons whom Shaw knew.

Jennifer is drawn after a certain lady who corresponded with Shaw and who regarded her husband as a god.

Dubedat owed some of his qualities to Edward Aveling whom Shaw knew well. Aveling was a talented man who was an atheist and a Marxist and who stuck to his convictions firmly. But he borrowed money from everyone and never paid it back. He used to take advances for Science lessons that he never gave. He was known for seducing women including his own girl students. But he died a noble death like an atheist saint. In all these respects Dubedat is a copy of Aveling. He is a talented artist. But he borrows money freely and he seduces Minnie Tinwell into marrying him when he was already married. He abandons her after three weeks when her money is finished. But he dies a glorious death proclaiming his faith in the world's great painters and in the greatness of Beauty and Art which had made his hands sacred.

Shaw was inspired to write these words by Wagner who in his story *End of a Musician in Paris* made his dying musician begin his creed with the words : "I believe in God, Mozart, Beethoven........."

Henderson, Shaw's biographer, has described an incident in Shaw's life which led him to begin writing this play. Granville Barker visited Shaw at Mevagissey on the sea-coast of Cornwall in 1906. Barker told them that at a tuberculosis hospital in London the doctors were taking great pains to cure patients who were worthless fellows and so did not deserve to live. At this Mrs. Shaw said that "there was a play in that". Shaw replied, "Sure enough, I believe you are right. Hand me my tablet and I will go to work on it at once". This is how the writing of *The Doctor's Delemma* was started.

Thus a lage part of *The Doctor's Dilemma* arose out of incidents in the life of George Bernard Shaw.

Q. 2. Comment on the title of the play—The Doctor's Dilemma.

Ans : Shaw has given a very attractive title to this play. It makes a person curious to know what dilemma faced a doctor and how he resolved it. So the reader is attracted towards the play and that is what a title is meant to do.

A dilemma is a situation in which a person has to make a difficult choice between two Conflicting courses of action.

The doctor here is Sir Colenso Ridgeon. He is a medical Specialist in St. Anne's Hospital, London. He has made a great discovery of a new treatment for tuberculosis. His T. B. patients do not die now. For this discovery he has been honoured with a knighthood by the king. He is fifty years old but is still a bachelor.

Mrs. Dubedat reads about Ridgeon's discovery in the newspapers. Her huband is suffering from tuberculosis. She has tried several treatments but he is getting worse and worse. As soon as she reads in the newspapers about Ridgeon's great discovery, she rushes to his house to persuade him to treat her husband. At first he refuses to see her because he is busy talking to his brother-doctors who have come to congratulate him on his knighthood. But she persists. Finally he agrees to she her for a few minutes. But when he sees her he is charmed by her beauty and he talks to her for a long time. He explains that his hands are full and he can not take another case. It is a new treatment and other doctors cannot do it. The facilities at St. Anne's hospital where he works, are just sufficient for ten cases and no more. She pleads that her husband is a great artist and

his life is very precious. She shows him some of his drawings. He is impressed by Dubedat's artistic ability and specially by his beautiful sketch of Jennifer. He says that if he is such a great artist he might squeeze him in and save his life. He invites her and her husband to a dinner he is giving to celebrate his knigthood. All the eminent doctors would be there and they can decide what should be done about him.

At the dinner Dubedat impresses everyone by his artistic talent. At the end of the dinner Ridgeon says, "There is no mistake about his being a genius. It is something to have got a case really worth saving." So far there is no dilemma.

Then Minnie Tinwell comes and tells them that Dubedat had married her, had spent all her money and then had deserted her and gone to another woman. The other doctors reveal that Louis had borrowed money from all of them and had taken away Walpole's golden cigarette case. He had even borrowed a half crown from Blenkinsop so that the poor fellow had no money now to go home by train. Blenkinsop now tells them that he is suffering from tuberculosis himself and he appeals to Ridgeon to cure him.

This creates a real dilemma for Dr. Ridgeon. Sir Patrick asks him, "Well, Mr. Saviour of Lives, which is it to be? that honest, decent man Blenkinsop, or that rotten blackguard of an artist, eh ?" The doctor had to decide whether he should save a talented artist who has no morals and has a weakness for money and women or [illegible]ood and decent doctor who has no talent.

If Ridgeon [illegible]ecided on moral grounds to kill Louis Dubedat and save Blenkinsop, the title would have been correct.

But the c[illegible] not made on moral grounds at all. Ridgeon decides to ki[illegible]dat because he has fallen in love with his wife and wants to marry his widow. He does not face the dilemma squarely. His love for Jennifer induces him to save Blenkinsop and kill Dubedat.

So *The Doctor's Dilemma* is a misleading title for this play. It is not apropriate to the action.

Another objection to the title is that this play does not have a unified plot with the Doctor's Dilemma as the central theme. The Dilemma is only one of the episodes in the play. The I Act is concerned with a detailed discussion of the whims and blunders of doctors. How is this connected with the dilemma faced by one of the doctors ?

Another objection is that the V Act has nothing to do with the dilemma. The dilemma has been resolved and Dubedat has died. The last Act is concerned with the disillusionment of Ridgeon regarding his love for Jennifer.

But some critics feel that the title is right and the whole play is concerned with Ridgeon's dilemma and the consequences of his decision on his life. In the I Act we are told that doctors are big blunderers. Ridgeon's blunders are an illustration of this. He makes two big blunders. He fails to understand the soul of Louis Dubedat. And he misunderstands the characters of Jennifer.

According to these critics the V Act is the resolution of the dilemma. Ridgeon thought that after Louis Dubedat's death he would reveal all the evils of Dubedat to his charming widow and tell her that he had killed her husband to make her happy. If Dubedat had not died she would have made the terrible discovery that the person whom she regarded as the King of Men was a big blackguard. By making her a widow he had made her happy.

But he is shocked to find that he had completely misunderstood her. She would-never have been disillusioned about Dubedat. She has nothing but contempt for Ridgeon. She does not even believe that an elderly man like him could make love to her, and she reveals that she has already married again. Ridgeon is now a really tragic figure as he is almost kicked out by Jennifer. This is a sequel to Ridgeon's wrong resolution of the dilemma.

If this view is accepted the title is appropriate to the action of the play. Of course, it would have been better if the title had been "*The Doctor's Dilemma and Its Sequel*."

Q. 3. Shaw has been described as a "destroyer and creator". Is this true of Shaw's writings on the medical profession ?

Ans. Shelley described the West Wind as a destroyer and creator. It is a destroyer because it destroys the leaves in autum. It is also a creator because it scatters the seeds and thus ensures that they create new life in spring. This is true of Shaw's attitude towards the medical profession. With his powerful humour, satire and wit he exposes all the evils of the medical profession as it existed in England at the beginning of this century, and proves that it was a "murderous absurdity". But he makes these expo-

sures only in order to make constructive suggestions for the reform of the medical service on socialistic lines. He is not only a destroyer but also a creator. He has to shatter the windows before fresh air can come in.

In *The Doctor's Dilemma* Shaw shows that every medical and surgical specialist has his own mania. After a few experiments he arrives at his pet theory and then he treats all his patients according to that theory. The theories are generally wrong and the sufferers are the poor patients. Thus Sir Colenso Ridgeon has his Opsonin theory for the treatment of tuberculosis. B. B's theory is that any anti-toxin is good enough for all diseases. Walpole's mania is that all diseases from typhoid to T. B. are due to blood poisoning and can be cured by removing the patient's Nuciform Sac.

In *The Philanderer* Dr. Paramore has discovered a fatal disease on the basis of experiments on three dogs and one monkey and he has called it Paramore's disease. Then on the basis of investigations by other doctors it was found that there was no such disease. When he hears that there is no such disease, he cries out in agony, "The worst of news ; Terrible news ! Fatal news ! My disease—the work of my life—it was all a mistake; there was no such disease".

Shaw, therefore, suggested that animals should not be used for experiments on diseases. He wanted that all medical researches should be coordinated and the treatment of diseases should be standardised. He also suggests that we should avoid unnecessary operations.

In *The Doctor's Dilemma* Shaw also shows the big blunders committed by doctors. An opera singer comes to Walpole for the removal of a growth in her vocal cords. Walpole does not touch her throat at all but removes her Nuciform Sac. It was, of course, lucky that she recovered. In another case, Walpole wanted to remove the Nuciform sac of a patient. But he found that the patient did not have the Nuciform Sac at all. He was so upset that he left the sponges inside and was stitching her up when the nurse missed them.

B. B. is a classic blunderer. The prince was suffering from fever. B. B. injected Ridgeon's anti-tuberculosis serum in him and yet the prince recovered. He had a scarlet fever case and he treated him with an anti-hydrophobia serum. In another case he

injected an anti-tetanus serum to a patient suffering from typhoid and an anti-typhoid serum to a patient suffering from tetanus.

Here Shaw draws our attention to the blunders which are constantly committed by doctors even in our own days. Recently in Hyderabad there was a case of a girl who had cancer in one eye. Her other eye was all right. She came to the surgeon for the removal of the cancerous eye. But he committed the blunder of removing the other eye. The cancerous eye had to be removed later on. So due to the blunder of the surgeon the girl became completely blind.

Shaw feels that doctors become cruel because they practise cruelty on animals in the course of their experiments. He, therefore, suggests that vivisection should be banned and doctors should be kind hearted and extremely careful when dealing with their patients.

Shaw's main criticism of doctors is that they live on the diseases of their patients. If the patients are healthy the doctors would starve. A poor doctor lives by prolonging the diseases of his patients. A surgeon lives by performing unnecessary operations. If the patients are poor a doctor cannot prescribe proper medicines. Thus Dr. Scutzmacher only prescribes Parrish's Chemical Food and Dr. Blenkinsop only asks his patients to eat a pound of ripe greengages. Dr. Blenkinsop has not read a book of medical science since he passed out of the Medical College.

All this is destructive criticism. But Shaw suggests a remedy for all the troubles. He is a socialist and his remedy is that the medical profession should be nationalised. The doctors should be paid well by the state. Their duties should be to prevent diseases and they should be rewarded if there are fewer diseases. If people fall ill they will be treated by the state doctors at state expense. Thus all the evils of the medical profession will disappear.

Thus Shaw was a destroyer as well as a creator. He made a savage attack on the medical services as they existed in the first decade of this century. But he also made constructive suggestions most of which have been implemented in England and other countries.

Q. 4. What was Shaw's purpose in writing this play ?

Ans. It is difficlt to say what exactly Shaw had in mind when he wrote this play. Perhaps he wanted to show that the evils

of the medical profession were due to the fact that the doctors were not paid to preserve the health of the people but had to live on the diseases of their patients. Or perhaps he meant this play to be a satire on the medical profession in which he wanted to expose the fads and follies of eminent doctors. Or perhaps he wanted to present the dilemma which a particular doctor faced when he had to choose between two patients who wanted to get his treatment. Or perhaps he wanted to show the love of an aging doctor for a beautiful young woman and his disappointment and disillusionment.

Let us consider all possibitilies.

Shaw had argued in the Preface that it was not the fault of the doctors that the medical service of the community was a murderous absurdity. The doctors are made to earn money by treating their patients. So if the doctors eradicate diseases they will starve. They can only prosper if there are diseases all around. Shaw, therefore, suggested that the state should take over the entire task of conquering diseases. The doctors should be paid by the state to preserve the health of the community. The purpose of the Preface was to make out a case for nationalising the medical services.

But this does not seem to be the purpose of this play. If this had been the purpose the doctors should have been shown to be competent and sincere creatures whose one aim was to serve the community but who were forced by circumstances to take fees from the patients. But as we read the I Act we find that the doctors are ignorant blunderers, with their own fads and frailties. There is, therefore, no case for nationalising this service. B. B., for instance, will commit the same blunders whether he is paid by his rich patrons or by the state. Walpole will continue to remove the Nuciform Sac whether he is a private surgeon or a government surgeon.

As we read the I Act we feel that Shaw's purpose was to satirise the medical profession. He takes the leaders of the profession and shows their faults and failings. Walpole feels that the panacea for all ills is the removal of the Nuciform sac. Ridgeon confesses that his anti-toxins which generally cure patients sometimes kill them. B. B. believes that a powerful anti-toxin prepared to combat T. B. can be injected into a patient of any disease at any time. Blenkinsop who is a private medical practitioner himself says that private doctors are "licensed murderers".

But if Shaw's purpose was only to expose the faults of doctors, he should have stopped at the end of the I Act, and he should not have called the play *The Doctor's Dilemma.* In the last four Acts of the play we are not told about the faults of doctors. On the other hand, we are told that B. B. and Walpole were kind even to animals. And Ridgeon's Opsonin treatment cures Blenkinsop completely. The purpose of the play could not, therefore, be only to satirise the medical profession.

Was it then his purpose to present the dilemma faced by a particular doctor ? The facilities in the hospital are limited and he can treat only a few patients. He wants to make his choice by considering whether the person concerned is worth saving. A stage comes when he can take only one more patient. Two patients approach him. One is a talented artist but he has no other goodness and the other is a good man but he has no talent. Which of them should be considered better and more fit to be saved ? This is a moral dilemma and should have been decided on merits. But Shaw confuses the issue by introducing Jennifer, the artist's young and beautiful wife. Ridgeon decides to save Blenkinsop and let Louis Dubedat be killed by being treated by the blunderer, B. B. He does so not because he considers Blenkinsop more worth saving but because he wants to marry the artist's wife after his death.

If Shaw's purpose was to concentrate on Ridgeon's moral dilemma there was no need of a long I Act on the whims and faults of doctors, and the beautiful woman, Jennifer, should not have been introduced at all. It should have been a straight choice between a genius who was not a good man and a good man who had no genius.

It is also possible that Shaw's purpose was to depict how an aging doctor who is a bachelor falls in love with the beautiful and young wife of an artist and gets him killed in order to marry the widow but is finally rejected by her. But if this was Shaw's purpose, the title of the play is quite wrong and the detailed discussion of the faults of the doctors and the sins of Louis Dubedat are absolutely irrelevant.

It is possible that Shaw started the play with the purpose of presenting a straight choice befor Dr. Ridgeon. But after writing a long I Act on doctors, he felt that the play was not becoming interesting enough and no real conflict was developing in it. So he introduced the rascally young artist and his beautiful young

wife. He was then so charmed by them that he allowed them to dominate the action in the rest of the play. Then, in order to add a further human interest to the story he introduced Ridgeon's love for Jennifer and his disillusionment.

Thus at the end of the play we are confused about Shaw's real purpose in writing this play.

Q. 5. "Shaw appears to be very destructive simply because he is very constructive". Discuss.

Ans. Shaw is very severe in his condemnation of the medical profession as it existed at the beginning of this century. He seems to be very destructive in his comments on doctors. He tells us that private doctors are "licensed murderers". Each specialist gets a mania and as a class the leaders of the profession are all ignorant blunderers.

Each doctor has his own pet theory of treating diseases. Walpole belives that all diseases are due to blood poisoning and can be cured by removing the Nuciform sac. This is his cure for all diseases from the failure of the vocal cords to T. B. A patient may be suffering from fever or tetanus, typhoid or T. B., B. B. will inject the same anti-toxin to him. Dr. Schutzmacher gave Parrish's Chemical Food to all patients and Dr. Blenkinsop only prescribed a pound of greengages to his patients. The medical science which these people practised was no better than a branch of witchcraft.

But Shaw is not against doctors. They are very nice and decent persons. The fault is not with them but with the system which makes them dependent for their livlihood on the diseases of their patients.

Shaw criticises the medical profession only because he wants to reform it. He is destructive only because he wants to be constructive. Windows have to be smashed before fresh air can be admitted. A reformer has to condemn the present evils before he can suggest remedies. Even while Shaw is condemning the profession he is suggesting remedies.

The worst aspect of the medical profession is that the doctors have a vested interest in disease. If the people are all healthy they would starve. They have a financial interest in the continuance of disease. They earn money by prolonging diseases and performing unnecessary operations because these are sources of income to them.

Shaw is a socialist. He wants to nationalise the medical profession. He believes that if there is no poverty, no drink, no dirt, no idleness and no overwork, there will be no disease. If there are any diseases it is the duty of the state to provide doctors to cure them. In his own words "Harley street should be municipalised".

A poor doctor is dangerous. He earns his living by prolonging the disease of his patients. Doctors should be paid well by the state. And the state should pay them to prevent diseases as well as to cure them. At present if there is an epidemic the doctors prosper. Actually the doctors should be penalised if there is an epidamic. They should be rewarded if there are fewer diseases.

A doctor should only be interested in curing diseases. He should not worry whether the patient is good or bad or whether by killing him he will get some personal benefit.

An ignorant doctor is dangerous. There should be refresher courses for practising doctors. When a new discovery is made, it should be widely publicised so that blunders like those of B. B. are not made.

The doctors are callous because in the name of medical research they practise cruelty on animals. If vivisection is banned the doctors will become kind-hearted men.

If society manages the medical profession the doctors will not work on the basis of their whims and fads. They will work together as a team. The profession should be organized by the state like the army. In the army the generals do not act on their whims. Like the army officers the doctors should work like a team.

Shaw's constructive suggestions have all been incorporated in the British Health Scheme. Doctors are no longer poor and ignorant. They do not live on the diseases of their patients. They are paid by the welfare State to eradicate diseases and to cure them when they make their appearance.

Thus Shaw's criticism was very constructive.

Q. 6. Sir Ralph Bloomfield Bonington says that "modern medicine is only a huge commercial system of quackery and poison." Is this true of the docors portrayed in The Doctors Dilemma ?

Ans. This statement of Sir Ralph is quite true of the doctors presented in this play including Sir Ralph himself.

These doctors are not quacks in the literal sense of the term because they have all graduated from a medical college. In fact, some of them are the leaders of the profession. But they are 'quacks' in the sense that they have not practised what they learnt in the medical college. Each doctor has his own pet theory and he practises it at the cost of his poor patients.

Blenkinsop is a real quack because he has not touched a medical book for thirty years after passing out from the medical college. He has forgotten all science. He does not prescribe medicines at all. He asks his patients, irrespective of their diseases to take a pound of ripe greengages half an hour before lunch.

Dr. Schutzmacher is another quack. He has become rich by giving to his patients Parrish's Chemical Food "no matter what the case is."

Sir Ralph has a charming personality and he is also a quack. He counts kings and princes and dukes and nobles among his patients but he is a quack. He has heard of the germ theory and of the phagocytes and he has built up a theory of his own. He does not give any medicine to his patients. He says that "drugs are a delusion." He wants that all the chemists' shops should be closed. His formula is very simple: "Find the germ and kill it". From this he has arrived at the dangerous conclusion that any anti-toxin is good enough for the patients suffering from any disease. The anti-toxin will stimulate the phagocytes and they will kill the disease germs. Thus he injected an anti-tetanus serum into a patient suffering from typhoid and an anti-typhoid serum into a patient suffering from tetanus. Both the patients recovered. He boldly injected an anti-toxin prepared by Ridgeon for T. B. into the body of Prince Charles who was suffering from fever and the prince recovered. He treated a scarlet fever case with a hydrophobia serum. In all these cases be blundered into success. But his blunder killed Louis Dubedat.

Sir Patrick Cullen believed that smallpox inoculation was good not only for smallpox but for all fevers.

Walpole is a good surgeon but he does not perform ordinary operations. His theory is that all diseases are caused by blood poisoning and can be cured by removing the petient's Nuciform sac. One opera singer came to him for the removal

of an overgrowth on her vocal cords. Walpole removed her Nuciform sac and yet she became all right. In another operation he forgot to take the sponges out and he was stitching them up when the nurse missed them.

Ridgeon claims to have discovered his opsonin treatment for T. B. But one girl, Jane Marsh, came to him with a tuberculous ulcer on her arm. Instead of curing it Ridgeon's inoculation only rotted her arm. From this he concluded that "the inoclulation that ought to cure sometimes kills". Of curse, in the case of Blenkinsop he blunders into success. He acts as a villain in getting Louis Dubedat killed so that he could marry his widow. Jennifer expresses the common opinion about doctors when she says, "Doctors think they hold the keys of life and death but it is not their will that is fulfilled. I don't believe you made any differeance at all."

Thus doctors are ignorant blunders who (in the words of H. G. Wells) are only interested in fee-hunting. They grow fat on the diseases of their patients. They prolong diseases and perform unnecessary operations in order to earn money. They commit blunders. Sometimes the patients get cured but generally they get worse.

Ridgeon gives the reason why these blunders do not come out. He says, "We are not a profession : we are a conspiracy".

The so-called eminent doctors are really ingorant quacks, each with his own mania and fad. As Shaw has said elsewhere, "The rank and file of the doctors is no more scientific than their tailors". Shaw, therefore, regards medical science as a branch of witchcraft.

Q. 7. Louis Dubedat is a scoundrel but he charms us on the stage. How does this happen ?

Ans : Louis Dubedat is definitely a scondrel. The morals of a man are judged from the way he behaves in matters of money and women. And in both these respects Louis Dubedat's behaviour is simply scandalous. And yet when the play is staged Dubedat charms all audiences.

Louis is young and handsome and has a frank smile. He remains calm and cool even when allegations of immoral conduct are made against him.

Humour is created when there is some deviation from the normal behaviour of persons. We all laugh when there is some

departure from the normal happening on the stage. Every unexpected action of statement amuses us. That is why Louis charms us. There is nothing witty in what he says but his effrontery and dazzling cheek keep the audiences amused.

Generally artists are shy. We expect a young artist to be overawed in the presence of eminent doctors who are all much older then he and of whom three are knights. But Louis treats them as equals and talks to them on terms of familiarity. This charms an audience.

Normally a patient would be grateful to the eminent doctors who take up his case and treat him free of cost. But Dubedat thinks that the doctors want to cure him because it would be feather in their cap to cure a rising artist.

When we borrow money from someone we make a solemn promise to him to return the money at the earliest. But Dubedat has no such intention. When he asks Ridgeon to lend him some money and Ridgeon tells him that he does not have money to spare, he says very innocently, "you mean you would want the money back again".

Normally we ask a surgeon how much he would charge us for an operation. But when Walpole suggests that he should operate upon him to remove his Nuciform sac, Dubedat asks him, "How much will you give me to let you do it ?" Walpole is taken aback and asks him, "What do you mean ?" He answers, "Well, you don't expect me to let you cut me up for nothing, do you ?"

He does not feel nerous when his lie is exposed. He says to Ridgeon, "There is a little sketch I made of her yesterday". Ridgeon, "She showed it to me a fortnight ago when she first called on me." He only says, "Oh, did she ? Good Lord ? how time does fly ?"

When Walpole asks him about the gold cigarette case which he had borrowed and forgotten to return, Dubedat does not apologise to him. He has the cheek to hand him a pawn ticket. And he adds, "It is quite safe; he cant sell it for a year, you know".

This action is very amusing on the stage.

A little later B. B. gets so angry at his impudence that he expresses a desire to take him by the scruff of the neck and give him a sound thrashing. Dubdat is unperturbed and says, "I wish you would. You would pay me something handsome to keep it out of court afterwards".

When the doctors ask him about his relations with Minnie Tinwell whom he had married and then deserted, he is not put out at all. He is not ashamed of his conduct. He mounts a counter attack on the doctors and puts them on the defensive. He proves that they are moral fantics who take delight in divorce suits and police cases. They do not understand his position. He made the poor girl happy by marrying her. For this bigamy he could have been put behind prison bars. But he made this sacrifice for the sake of the happiness of Minnie Tinwell. The tables are really turned on the doctors and the audience is charmed by his success in making the black appear white.

We are highly amused when this rascal says that he is a disciple of Bernard Shaw and is trying to become a superman.

His death is itself a pose. He dies after painting his finest picture on his wife's mind. We are amused when she later on calls this rascal a "King of Men".

In life we cannot tolerate thieves, cowards, liars and drunkards, but on the stage we are amused by a person who has no conscience and who is, therefore, free of all moral laws. Thus we are delighted by Falstaff, the hill of flesh, who is a knight but a great liar, thief and coward.

Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale* befools simple people and picks up "unconsidered trifles". But he amuses us immensely. Tony Lumpkin in *She Stoops to Conquer* is an illiterate drunkard who conspires against his own mother.

They are scoundrels but they have amused generations of readers and theatre-goers.

Louis Dubedat amuses us for the same reasons.

Q 8. "Louis Dubedat is a victim of circumstances". Discuss.

Ans. Louis Dubedat is a talented artist. He is only 23 years old but already he seems to be a genius as a painter. A very beauttful and rich girl, Jennifer, falls in love with him and wants to help him to develop his art. So she marries him. In normal course they should have led a happy life and he should have earned renown as an artist.

But circumstances turn against him. He catches the infection of tuberculosis. His wife takes him to several doctors but he gets worse and worse.

Then Jennifer reads in the newspapers about Ridgeon's great discovery of a cure for T. B. She hurries to his house. She is

told that he can see no one. But she patiently waits outside. A number of eminent doctors come to congratulate Ridgeon on his knighthood. Because of her great beauty she attracts the attention of the eminent doctor, B. B. and the eminent surgeon, Walpole. She is told again and again that Ridgeon can see no patient. But she persists. She even bribes Emmy, Ridgeon's maid-servant. Finally Ridgeon agrees to meet her for a few minutes.

Once she meets him he is charmed by her beauty. He explains to her that the hospital is full and he can not take any new patient. He has selected ten patients out of a long list of applicants because they were good persons and deserved to live. She tells him that her husband is a very talented artist and definitely deserves to live. She shows him his drawings. Ridgeon is tremendously impressed by the drawings, specially by the sketches that Dubedat has made of his wife. He feels that the artist is really worth saving and he invites her and her huband to a dinner he is giving to all his doctor-friends in honour of his knighthood.

At the dinner Louis Dubedat impresses all the doctors very well. He makes sketches of the doctors on their menu cards. Ridgeon is now sure that Dubedat is a genius and deseves to be saved. When he coughs Ridgeon assures his wife that he would cure him of that. The couple is sent to the Railway Station in Walpole's car. Jennifer is satisfied that her husband will be cured.

It is only after they have left that trouble arises for Dubedat. A beautiful hotel maid, Minnie Tinwell, comes to the doctors secretly and tells them that she is Dubedat's legally married wife. He had married her and then deserted her after three weeks when all her money was finished. So the great artist was a bigamist. Then it appears that he had tried to borrow money from some of the doctors and had taken away Walpole's golden cigarette case. But the worst thing that he had done was that he had borrowed half a crown from poor Blenkinsop and had not returned it. Ridgeon now starts having his doubts whether Dubedat is really worth saving. He has also fallen in love with Mrs. Dubedat.

Then something happens which creates a dilemma in Ridgeon's mind. Blenkinsop reveals to them that he is suffering from T. B. and he appeals to his old class-fellow, Ridgeon, to save him. Ridgeon can take only one patient. Whom is he to take ? Sir Patrick puts it thus :

"Well, Mr. Saviour of Lives, which is it to be ? that honest decent man Blenkinsop or that rotten blackguard of an artist, eh ?"

Ridgeon now talks of his marrying Dubedat's widow if he dies. We feel that Dubedat's fate is now sealed.

In the next Act all the doctors come to Dubedat's studio to examine him and decide the course of treatment. Unfortunately for the artist, Ridgeon comes first. Dubedat has just promised to his wife that he would never borrow money from anyone. But the moment he is alone with Ridgeon, he asks him to lend him £ 150. And, to Ridgeon's dusgust he suggests to the doctor that he should get £ 200 in return by blackmailing his wife, Jennifer. He also suggests to Ridgeon that he should blackmail his patients and force them to purchase his paintings. This is too much for Ridgeon and he decides that he "will not lift a finger to save this reptile".

B. B. agrees to treat him because he does not consider the morals of his patients. He would treat him with Ridgeon's anti-toxins. Ridgeon knows that it is extremely dangerous to inject his powerful serum in a patient without first checking up his Opsonin index. He knows that B. B. does not understand this treatment. Still he gives his serum to B. B. expecting that it will kill Dubedat and give him a chance to marry his widow.

As was expected B. B. injected the serum when Dubedat's Opsonin was in the negative phase and thus his disease which would have killed him in three months killed him in three days.

Thus a chain of circumstances bring about Louis Dubedat's end.

Q. 9 What does Shaw mean by saying that "nothing is more dangerous than a poor doctor" ? Do you agree with his view ?

Ans : Shaw thinks that a poor doctor is dangerous to society because he is ignorant as a doctor and dishonest as a man. Dr. Blenkinsop is a poor doctor in *The Doctor's Dilemma*. He confesses that he has not touched a medical book since he passed out of the medical College thirty years ago. He is very poor and he has to spend all his time earning his living. He has no time to read medical books and journals. He does not understand the discovery of Dr. Ridgeon. He does not even understand that Dr. Ridgeon's new treatment was for tuberculosis. It is only when he comes for the dinner that he hears the doctors talking about this treatment of T. B. Then he approaches Ridgeon to treat him because his right lung is touched.

Dr. Blenkinsop's patients are all very poor and so he does not prescribe any medicines for them. He only asks his patients to eat a pound of greengages everyday because these are very cheap.

A poor and ignorant doctor like Blenkinsop is not a doctor at all. He cannot treat a patient at all and if a patient suffering from a serious disease goes to such a doctor he would certainly die. So this doctor is really dangerous. That is why Blenkinsop said from his own experience that private medical practitioners are "licensed murderers".

A poor doctor is dangerous in another way also. He thrives on the diseases of his patients. If they do not fall ill or get quickly cured, he would starve. So he deliberately prolongs the diseases of his patients.

A patient makes his surgeon the judge to decide whether an operation is necessary or not. A poor surgeon would always decide against the patient—that is in favour of performing an operation. He earns money if he performs the operation. So these poor doctors keep on performing unnecessary operations.

Thus far we are in agreement with Shaw. But we do not agree that only a poor doctor can be dangerous. Even a rich doctor who is ignorant can be dangerous. B. B. is a rich doctor whose patients are all high class people. He does not understand the use of medicines at all. He talks a lot about science but is absolutely ignorant. He gave a medicine prepared by Ridgeon for his T. B. patient to the prince who was snffering from typhoid. It was lucky that the prince recovered. He does not understand Ridgeon's discovery at all. The anti-toxin is very strong and is to be injected only after determining the Opsonin Index of the patient. If it is injected at the wrong time it may kill a patient. This is just what happens to Louis Dubedat. B. B. gives him the injection at the wrong time and so a disease which could have killed him in three months, kills him in three days. Thus B. B. who is a rich doctor, is very dangerous because of his ignorance.

But the most dangerous doctor is one who does not *want* to cure a patient. At first Ridgeon agrees to treat Louis Dubedat. But then he finds that Lous is a very immoral man. He has also fallen in love with Mrs. Dubedat. So he wants that Louis should be killed so that he can marry his widow.

Thus Shaw is right in saying that a poor doctor is dangerous because he is generally ignorant and wants to prolong the dis-

eases of his patients. But a rich doctor who is ignorant is equally dangerous. And the most dangerous of all is a rich doctor who kills a patient because he wants to marry his widow.

Q. 10. "Ridgeon has made the right decision on the wrong grounds".—Desmond Macarthy. Discuss.

Ans : The decision referred to here is the decision of Dr. Ridgeon to admit Blenkinsop for treatment and hand over Louis Dubedat to B. B. who was a blunderer and who did not fully understand Ridgeon's discovery.

Dr. Ridgeon had discovered a new treatment for tuberculosis. It was a dangerous treatment because if the powerful anti-toxin prepared by Ridgeon was jnjected into a patient at a wrong time his disease would get worse and he may die. If the serum was injected at the right time the patient would be cured. Everything depended on the "Opsonin index" of the patient which could be determined by testing his blood. Opsonin was the sauce which was mixed with the disease germs so that the phagocytes or white blood corpuscles might devour them and save the patient. So the serum was to we injected at a time when the Opsonin Index of the patient was one. At this time the patient's body was producing a lot of Opsonin and so he would be cured. If the serum was injected at a time when the opsonin index was below 8, the patient would die.

The facilities in St. Anne's hospital were so limited that Ridgeon could treat only ten patients at a time. He selected these patients very carefully after considering whether their lives were worth saving. He could not admit any more paitents.

He is now approached by two patients. They are both suffering from T. B. and they want Ridgeon to cure them with his new opsonin treatment. Ridgeon found that he could squeeze in only one patient. Hence the dilemma arose before him whom he should admit.

Ridgeon wanted to undertake the treatment of the patient whose life was worth saving. But in this case it was very difficult to decide which of them was more worth saving.

The first patient, Louis Dubedat, was a very talented artist. He was a great painter and his paintings gave pleasure to thousands of people. But he had two great weaknesses—money and women. He was married to Jennifer who was greatly devoted to him. But he met Minnie Tinwell in another city and married

her. In three weeks he spent all her money and all the money that he could borrow and then he deserted her.

At the dinner to which he had been invited by Ridgeon he tried to borrow money from all the doctors. He took Walpole's golden cigarette case and quietly pocketed it and later pawned it. He even borrowed half a crown from poor Blenkinsop by telling him a lie. He made a solemn promise to his wife that he would never borrow money. And yet within ten minutes he asked Ridgeon to lend him £ 150. He was prepared to give him a post-dated cheque for £ 200 which would be dishonoured by his bank. He then suggested that he should get the money from Jennifer by blackmailing her. He also told him that as a doctor he must be knowing many secrets of his patients. He should tell them that he would reveal their secrets to the public unless they purchased Dubedat's pictures. Ridgeon was disgusted and he decided that he would not raise a finger to save "this viper".

Blenkinsop, the other patient who wanted to be treated by Ridgeon, had no talent but was a very good and sincere man.

The choice thus was between a genius who was a blackguard and a good man who was not a genius.

Ridgeon decided to treat Blenkinsop and he handed over Louis Dubedat to B. B. who did not consider the morals of his patients. Ridgeon gave his powerful serum to B. B. and he was sure that B. B. would inject it at the wrong time and kill Louis. This is just what happened.

Ridgeon's decision was right. Dubedat was such an immoral character that he was a danger to society. Such a man did not deserve to live. Blenkinsop could not paint pictures but his life was an asset to society because he was a decent man.

But the grounds on which he took this decision were wrong. He decided to get Louis Dubedat killed because he was in love with his beautiful wife and he wanted to marry her after Louis was dead.

Ridgeon's motives in getting Louis killed were mixed ones. He thought that Louis was sacrificing his wife and making her miserable. So in getting Louis killed he was acting as Jennifer's best friend. She did not know his weaknesses and so regarded him as a great man. When she came to know that the person whom she regarded as a god was the worst blackguard in the world, she would become miserable. So he wanted to preserve her hero by killing her husband.

But Ridgeon was wrong in this. Jennifer knew all the faults of her husband and yet deified him. She would never have been disillusioned about him.

Ridgeon is also wrong in thinking that Jennifer would respond to his love after her husband's death. She could not even imagine that an elderly man like Ridgeon would even think of marrying her. When she pledges eternal friendship to him she does so to the saviour of her husband and not to his murderer. So when he confesses that he was responsible for getting Louis killed, she has nothing but contempt for this little man who tried to kill a great one. Finally she shocks him by revealing that she has already married someone else. He can only say that in that case he had killed Louis for nothtng.

Thus Desmond Maccarthy is right in saying that Ridgeon took the correct decision in getting "the rotten blackguard of an artist" killed but the grounds on which he took the decision were wrong.

Q. 11 "The death of Louis Dubedat, though quite touching, does not arouse true tragic emotions". Discuss.

Ans : In the plays of Shaw there is a lot of discussion of various problems and there is very little action on the stage. William Archer challenged Shaw to show a death on the stage in one of his plays. Shaw accepted the challenge and showed the death of Louis Dubedat in *The Doctor's Dilemma.* He felt that in a play dealing with doctors he could easily show the death of a patient. That is why Shaw called this play a tragedy. But while this death touches us, it does not arouse the type of tragic emotions which are aroused when we see the death of Othello or Hamlet on the stage.

Every death affects the family and friends of the deceased. But the death of a tragic hero touches millions of people to the depth of their hearts and creates a sense of terror in them. Such feelings are not aroused by the death of Louis Dubedat.

Louis is a young artist who dies prematurely of galloping tuberculosis. He dies a noble death. Although he is very young he is not afraid to die. He is perfectly at peace. He has been sinning all his life but at this moment hisconscience is clear. He feels that as an artist he has done nothing wrong. He is not selfish. He wants his wife to dress up beautifully after his death and to marry again. She must look beautiful and be happy.

He does not believe in God and he does not repent for his sins. But he died like a saint uttering his artistic creed: "I believe in Michael Angelo, Valasquez, and Rembrandt; in the might of design, the mystery of colour, the redemption of all things by Beauty everlasting, and the message of Art that has made these hands blessed. Amen. Amen".

An artist could not die better than this. B. B. is greatly touched and starts quoting and misquoting Shakespeare. His wife is tremendously moved. She says, "We have shared together a great privilege and great happiness. I dont think we can ever think of ourselves as ordinary people again. We have had a wonderful experience, and that gives us a common faith, a common ideal, that nobody else can quite have. Life will always be beautiful to us, death will always be beautiful to us."

But the other doctors, the readers and the members of the audience are not much moved. The scene, of course, rises to the heights of poetry and emotion. And we have the feeling of waste. If he had lived longer he would have painted beautiful pictures. They are lost to the world. But be are not touched to our depths by this death, why ?

The reason is given by Sir Patrick when he says, "It matters very little how a man dies. What matters is how he lives".

We are tremendously moved by the death of Hamlet or Machbeth or Othello or King Lear because they were great men who did noble actions all their lives. Each one of them met his tragic end not because of some disease but because of some flaw in his character.

What about Louis Dubedat ? He was a common blackguard who could not be trusted in matters of money and women. He was absolutely selfish and he did not mind sacrificing anyone including his own wife. Even as an artist he was not an outstandining genius. Even his death-bed speeches were a pose. Ridgeon was right in calling him "a clever brute". How, then, could his death move us ?

If we see on the stage the death of a towering personality who has all the noble qualities and who has fought heroically against heavy odds but has suffered because of just one weakness in his character,. we get the true tragic emotions—the feelings of terror and awe. Louis Dubedat has led an ignoble life and so his noble feelings for his wife and the expression of his artistic creed at the time of his death appear to be a pose and so his death does not create the true tragic emotions.

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